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THE LILY OF THE ARNO



Florence

THE LILY OF THE ARNO

By
VIRGINIA W. JOHNSON

Author of "Genoa, the City of Columbus," etc.

The world does not require so much to be informed as to be reminded.—HANNAH MORE.



Illustrated by
JOHN W. COLEMAN
OF
CALIFORNIA

BOSTON

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TO
THE FLOWER CITY

THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED

WITH ADMIRATION OF HER BEAUTY, AND REVERENCE FOR
THE NOBILITY OF HER MEMORIES

FLORENCE, 1891



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THE LILY OF THE ARNO;

OR,

FLORENCE, PAST AND PRESENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE STREET OF THE WATERMELON.

IN the city of Florence there is a thoroughfare now bearing the name of the Via Ricasoli, but which was formerly known as the Via del Cocomero, or the Street of the Watermelon.

The street is narrow, dark, and still mediæval in character, and leads from the Piazza of St. Mark to the Cathedral. How many mortals have found their brief span of existence from birth to death within this line of shadow between the two open spaces of public squares! How vital the elements of history in the development of the Florentine commonwealth, which had their theatre of action on this spot!

On the left hand there is a window; and through it such light as these pages may hope to offer must filter. Truly, "the understanding is indeed thy window, — too clear thou canst not make it; but phantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased." The casement is one of many in the wall of a palace. Externally it is heavy, yet of a symmetrical form, and protected by an iron grating, curving outward at the base in the form known as kneeling (*inginocchiata*), which permits the inmate to

glance up and down the pavement at ease. Within the chamber the embrasure is gained by two marble steps, covered with Persian or Turkish rugs, or even rendered less cold by a margin of white fur in winter.

A sheaf of flowers rests on the ledge, and sheds abroad the fragrance of the Tuscan spring. These *fleurs du vent* — the iris, so long an emblem of the town, and still to be found blooming in moat and crevice of masonry, purple anemones, and scarlet tulips — were gathered this morning on a slope of Fiesole, amid the fresh green corn and sprays of budding vine.

The mansion is spacious and lofty, with massive cornices projecting over the street, and the iron cramps still visible on the roof where cloth of traffic was spread to dry by thrifty merchants, in a day when the Guild of Wool rivalled the trade of Genoa or Lucca, and fairs were held in the Piazza of Santo Spirito to display the wares, while the worthy burghers, as pious citizens, were expected to embellish certain altars of the churches, and enrich the shrines of patron saints. Beyond our window is a cresset of wrought iron, worthy of having been fashioned by Niccolò Caparra.

The old house is rich in association with the past, although no longer tenanted by the rightful owners. On occasion it becomes transfigured with the most superb and characteristic illumination, in honor of the Queen's birthday. The iron rings and sockets of the façade burn the wax torches of the Middle Ages, when the town is brilliant elsewhere with gas jets, electric disks, and Venetian garlands of lamps. Beyond the great draughty gateway and damp vestibule, where the little pale girl Agata hovers shiveringly near the porter's door, the mouldy court is visible, with faded frescos crumbling from the walls, while the inscriptions to dead historians and statesmen, above the numerous portals, are still decipherable. In the som-

bre apartments, pictures, tapestries, and velvet hangings, with the gold thread of the embroideries untarnished, still speak of a race numbering priors, soldiers, and *gonfaloniere* of the Republic among their ancestors. In obscure alcoves, precious fragments of marble and *pietra serena*, once shaped by the chisel of Donatello and Mino da Fiesole, are treasured, as well as busts of exiles, long dead in banishment like Dante, victims of the existing wrath of the hour, Guelph or Ghibelline, Black or White factions.

Across the way is the shop of the rosy and smiling vegetable-woman. Her door is stocked with a tempting array of red tomatoes, strings of pearly onions, tufts of celery and radishes, almonds in the green pod, as well as peas and beans, to be eaten raw by the initiated. Salads in all varieties of the crisp, bitter, and curling leaf abound. The salad is as indispensable to the Florentine as to the Greek.

The vender of wood and charcoal occupies a cavernous cellar of our palace wall. Why not? All must live, and each gain his bread in his own way. The *carbonajo* is a short stout man of forty years of age, robust and vigorous, with a humorous nose turned up at the tip, little, twinkling eyes, and a nature as sound as his own olive and chestnut logs, which he extols with abundant gesticulation. Dusky myrmidons come and go at his bidding, bearing on their backs the bags of charcoal sent down from the Apennines for that primitive altar dedicated to culinary rites, the Florence kitchen.

The man of charcoal has his grievances, like the rest of the world. In his case they assume the shape of modern Viennese iron stoves, capable of burning coke and coal, Parisian inventions to warm humanity with a petroleum lamp, Piedmontese calorifers, with smart brass doors and valves, warranted to consume their own smoke, in lieu of the cavernous, open chimney that formerly devoured fuel

with a giant's appetite, and gave no sign, scarcely deluding shivering mortals with a sensation of transient warmth.

In the matter of private history our *carbonajo* is a widower, and whether from the public reprehension which would attach to him in the opinion of his own circle if he took a second wife, or because his first experience of matrimony was unsatisfactory, he expresses scorn and defiance of womankind. His son, a small boy with a frosty nose and a wooden expression of countenance, is returned to him at four o'clock in the afternoon from the public school of the quarter, and loiters about the premises, receiving awkward, masculine cares, in the matter of shoe-tying and collar-adjusting, from his fond parent, is played with by the dusky myrmidons at leisure moments, and petted by the Street of the Watermelon, with the kindness so invariably bestowed on children by the Florentines.

The coal-dealer is rigid in the observance of all holidays. He is ready at any time to close his door, place his felt hat jauntily over his left ear, take his little son by the hand, and seek the Arno bank, if any spectacle, such as dragging the current of the river for the corpse of a suicide, invite his interest. Failing result of such grewsome dredging, he contents himself with basking in the sun with his back to the parapet, and inspecting the feathers on the hats of the ladies, the jewels sparkling in their ears, the rich furs, as the file of brilliant equipages passes in the drive of the afternoon to the Cascine.

Who so proudly elated as the son of the widower, on such occasions? A fig for stay-at-home, coddling mothers and sisters, if one can walk abroad with the father, making shrill, infantile comments on men and things, so patiently and indulgently responded to by the daddy (*babbo*) in the streets.

The dealer in old books has a musty little shop beyond our palace wall. A stray volume of Petrarch or Ariosto,

bound in shrunken, yellow parchment, may be here discovered beneath piles of cheap prints, sheets of music, the red guidebooks picked up by thrifty servants in hotel and *pension*, the faded albums of the school of keepsake poetry, embellished by the Countess of Blessington, scattered by the decease of old English ladies who had brought the household gods of provincial homes, the mahogany furniture and Wedgwood tea-pots of the auction sales, to Italy.

The dealer is a tall thin man of studious aspect, and a uniform, powdery grayness of hue in hair, beard, complexion, and raiment, as if the sun had forgotten to pay him a visit in his dark nook, where he handles little pictures of saints painted on copper, crumbling leaves of woodcuts suggestive of Albert Dürer, and portions of dilapidated missals that gleam with gold tracery and softly blended colors on illuminated pages, like fragments of rainbows amid neutral-tinted papers. As a Florentine, does the gray and shadowy old man share the usual eccentricities of the bibliopole? Has he the excellent memory necessary to the true librarian, — a quality to be ranked with that of the king, who never forgets the face of a subject presented to him, the actor, the barber, the club porter, the cabman? Is he entitled to a place between Magliabecchi and the famous old woman, La Mère Mansut of the Latin quarter of Paris? The former regretted that he did not own a copy of the “Cosmogony” of the historian Zouaras, and once mentioned incidentally that the work in question, bound in white vellum, with red edges, was in the library of the Grand Signior at Constantinople, in the left-hand corner of the third shelf from the ceiling, in the southern kiosque, facing the Golden Horn, in the palace of the old seraglio. The latter, shrewd and lineal descendant of generations of second-hand booksellers, could rummage out from some dark recess of her humble abode

an almost forgotten specimen of antique lore at a moment's notice.

Opposite, there is a taciturn antiquarian, whose shop-window affords only transient and oblique glimpses of ivory carvings, enamelled tea-spoons, amber, Venetian lamps, tapestry, and majolica, so often is it closed. A mysterious and silent, if not saturnine, person is the antiquarian, with many business interests in other portions of the town. He would have been accepted as an astrologer or a necromancer in an earlier century.

There is an element of poetical as well as historical suggestiveness in the names of by-ways of Italian cities. We seek them rather than the modern Corso Vittorio Emanuele, Piazza d'Azeglio, and Indipendenza, or Via Cavour, Margherita, and Umberto, of our day. In Florence a group of such relics resists the spirit of modern innovation.

One may traverse streets of the Lily, the Sun-Dial, the Almond, the Guilds of Silk, and the Furriers, as well as the Via Maggio (Street of May), and the Borgo Allegro, where Cimabue painted his famous Madonna for the chapel of Santa Maria Novella. The Street of the Lamb still skirts the Murate, now the city prison, and once the convent of noble ladies, erected at the extreme limit of town wall, where Catherine de' Medici was educated. The young men still linger at the corner of the Oranges, where the singers of the populace have met on fine evenings and improvised melodies to the accompaniment of guitars for generations. The Street of the Geese invites the pedestrian, as here the ancient bakery of the Campanile of Giotto makes the delicate ring of cake, the *ciambelle*, eaten in the day of Michelangelo.

(Why is the honest, fatted goose of Michaelmas and Christmas, dear to the household of England, France, and Germany, scorned by the Florence market, where the bird

does not venture to make an appearance, unless in the guise of *pâté-de-foie-gras*? Delicacy of appetite in a people of farinaceous diet cannot explain the absence of the goose, since the Florentine is fond of pork, stewed in a saucepan with vegetables, or eaten raw after such primitive domestic curing as sprinkling with salt and hanging up in a cellar. A paternal municipality must needs restrain, by law, this *penchant* for raw pig, by forbidding the sale before October within the city gates. The melancholy fact remains that the goose does not haunt the Arno shore as it does the banks of the Loire, the Meurthe, the Seine Inférieure, or the stubble fields of Arezzo, while the Capitoline sentinel must linger, if only in tradition, on the Roman Campagna.)

What memories the names of the ancient by-ways awaken of rich pageants, the pomp of religious processions, fierce conflicts of opposing political factions, and high garden walls, sheltering pomegranate trees, parterres of roses and violets, with a pink cloud of blossoming shrubbery occasionally visible above the boundary of parapet!

Our Street of the Watermelon recalls the tender twilight of summer nights merging from August to September. Groups of the people, happy, tranquil, and indolent, are then seated on the stone bench flanking a palace, eating slices of the luscious fruit, or gathered about the little stands of the venders in the square of the Baptistery and along the Via Calzajuoli. How the strings of tinted lanterns sway above the piles of huge green balis, while flaming torches shed fitful gleams on the bronze doors of Ghiberti, the campanile, and the Duomo opposite, and even the statues in the niches of Or San Michele! The flickering ray of torch and Chinese lantern, the deep shadow of a sculptured archway, and the crowd ebbing and flowing, with laughter, gossip, and song, devouring the plebeian fruit,—such is the picture of the summer night.

Why Street of the Watermelon? Did the melon first reach the thirsty lips of the populace by this gate, promising delicious coolness of crimson pulp within firm emerald rind? Some mediæval urchin may have sighed in an ecstasy of satiety, "Let the lane henceforth be known as the Via del Cocomero."

Whence came the fruit? Did a Persian, pining for the autumn food of the population of Iran, as for the peaches of Ispahan, or the pears of Nathenz, ripen Tuscan melons in wistful remembrance of the hoard of the Kum bazaar?

Inseparably associated with this phase of street christening, the emblems of certain families evince a grain of sly humor. The border of garlic around the escutcheon of the Agli; a cluster of shalots for the Scalogni; fig-leaves delicately sculptured on the mansion of Messer Foglia, in the Old Market; or the three poppies on the shield of the Salimbeni, in the Via Porta Rossa, with the warning attached to the somnolent flowers, "Sleep not" (*Per non dormire*),—may have possessed equal value with the lions rampant on gold and silver ground, and the mailed arm grasping a battle-axe of haughty neighbors.

What may have been the coat-of-arms of the Baronci, who dwelt in the shadow of the Duomo, in Boccaccio's tale of the "Jest of Michael Scalza"? We are told that this sprightly young gentleman laid a wager of a supper for six persons on the assertion of the Baronci being not only the most ancient family in Florence, but in the whole world. The race in question had clearly been fashioned when Nature was in her infancy, and resembled the drawings of children. One had too broad a countenance, another a narrow face, a third a hooked chin, a fourth a nose an ell long, a fifth squinting eyes. Consequently the Baronci were the oldest, and therefore the

most noble citizens. Satire triumphed, and Michael Scalza won his wager.

The emblem of Florence should have been the domestic cat, instead of the lion. Whence came the first cat, entering into tranquil and assured possession of the Florentine heart and hearthstone, with a majestic, feline calmness of deportment? At what date did Grimalkin appear in the page of history, — deft, sleek, quiet, with mysterious green eyes shining in the obscurity, or, yielding to sudden fierceness of tooth and claw, render urgent a visit to the hospital for speedy cauterization of wounds on the part of scared youth or teasing urchin?

Poor old women hug their furry pets in their arms, suspicious of the readiness of wretches — former denizens of the quarter of the Old Market, and now banished to the San Frediano quarter across the river — to pop Pussy into the soup-pot of famine. Gentle old men talk in coaxing accents to the brindled friend of the court and kitchen, receiving responsive caresses of arched back, rubbed affectionately against a rheumatic knee.

Note the mantle of good fortune that protects the cat among a people cruel to animals. To maltreat Puss will surely bring speedy misfortune on a brutal man; while to find a dead animal in a newly occupied abode is the worst of omens.

For the one American woman mentioned by an English author as deriving fresh courage in exile from contemplation of Albertinelli's beautiful picture of the Salutation in the Uffizi Gallery, many a weary tourist, bored with guide-books, and harassed in mind by dates, has brightened to a sentiment of pleasure at sight of Puss-in-Boots. The Florence cat has purred a welcome more or less airy, yet needing no interpreter of tongues to assure the dejected stranger that the world is small and the human family one.

The Street of the Watermelon is a cat paradise, like the other thoroughfares of the city.

The cat of the antiquarian, large, plump, and with a lustrous, tawny coat of rich fur, steps daintily over the laces and brocades of the shop-window, to seat himself in a superb Chinese punch-bowl, where he blinks and dozes in the sun, with half-closed eyes, like a miniature tiger of a zoölogical garden.

The companion of the dealer in old books, lean, wiry, and gray, resembles the familiar spirit of a wizard, and hunts mice in dark nooks, as if versed in secrets of Black Art.

The tabby of the rosy vegetable-woman is short, stumpy, and plebeian in type, with white paws like mittens, and a shirt-front ; while a sinister demon, with yellow eyes, lurks in the cellar of the coal-merchant.

The little Agata, the porter's daughter, has a cat, whether she wishes it or not, for a portly, black animal has walked into the vestibule and taken cool possession of the premises, in marked contrast to canine deprecation of hostility under similar circumstances.

"It will not go away," Agata explains, regarding the intruder without enthusiasm. "I try to drive it off with a stick, but it seems to take a beating as a joke."

"A black cat brings luck, Agata."

"Yes," assents the girl, smilingly.

There is a cat that knows its own mind in choosing a home. Of course the gentle Agata will feed and shelter the outcast thrust upon her benevolence.

Each of these animals has a fashion of pausing on the threshold at times, and gazing up and down the street, as if inspecting the pedestrians, precisely as do their masters in a moment of leisure. Now an odd creature approaches, and pauses to feed the cats with a dainty morsel taken from a capacious pocket. She is the English woman so familiar

to Florence, and more mad than *forestieri* are usually supposed to be. The cats are her sole care. *Poveretta!* Some affair of the heart turned her brain in early maidenhood. Let her have her own way in peace. It is all the same to cat and citizen. The insane woman has a round, white, and vacant face, curiously resembling the physiognomy of Maggy in "Little Dorrit." She wears a faded gown of a bygone fashion, a hoop-skirt, a flowered shawl, and a large poke bonnet of yellow straw, with the ribbons of white watered silk floating over her shoulders. She might have emerged from a woodcut of Cruikshank, in a city where eccentric waifs of all nationalities abound. The cats receive their gifts capriciously. The vegetable-woman smiles compassionately. Surely it is an indication of remarkable refinement in a people, that no one mocks at nor molests her footsteps with an attendant, jeering rabble of boys, as might so readily happen in the large capitals of the world. Here is a limit to the street Arab's witticisms, who sang beneath the windows of the archiepiscopal palace, when Pope Martin V. was lodged there in an hour of misfortune, that he was not worth a penny, thereby laying up a future grudge of affronted dignity for the Flower City in the mind of the pontiff.

The English woman rambles on, with the purposeless movements of an unsettled mind. Doubtless she will find her way to that palace courtyard of the Lung' Arno Nuoyo, which is a startling feline nightmare, where heads peer out of the shrubbery in every stage of cathood. Nor will she return home without pausing at the cloister of the Church of San Lorenzo, where homeless animals receive municipal bounty on occasion, possibly in imitation of the hospital once existing near the Gate of Victory at Cairo.

The Street of the Watermelon is silent. The sound of passing vehicles, the strident clamor of the lace and shoe pedler, the plaintive, minor note of the knife-grinder, pierce

the stillness only to die away to quiet once more. "He who is contented enjoys life," says the proverb, reputed to be so venerable that it has grown a white beard.

Reader, come and dwell in the Street of the Watermelon !

Are you wearied of warring elements in the terrific velocity of movement of the nineteenth century, or merely "half sick of shadows," like the Lady of Shalott ? Contentment, the old man with the white beard, reigns here.

Do you possess those Greek qualities of character still possible in our day, and discover a charm in water flowing from the rock, the movements of a lizard, the music of a cricket in a garden ? Then note the yellow roses crowning the chrome-tinted convent wall of the Via Colonna in May sunshine, the Franciscan monk pausing on the step of Giotto's Campanile in the light of morning, the noonday radiance resting on the head of the Perseus of the Loggia de' Lanzi. Better still, does your soul respond to the very soul of these stones which are so eloquent of lives long vanished, whose memory lingers in our street, imparting to the tranquil nook a germ of immortality ? If you come, "do not leave the sky out of your landscape" to brood over the gutter incidents of the town, and poison your mind with the sewer emanations of the daily tide, always possible here as elsewhere. In "Pilgrim's Progress" the angel patiently proffers the crown to the man who anxiously wields his muck rake to gather his harvest of straws.

If a traveller hastening on elsewhere, at least pass reverently, in remembrance that while Florence was "his beautiful sheepfold" to the benign Saint Zenobius, and to Dante the famous daughter of Rome, Savonarola, deeply imbued with poetical and monastic mysticism, pronounced the fair city the New Jerusalem, and the shrine of devout pilgrimage for the remote corners of the earth, covered by the odor of her lilies, as the bride of Jesus Christ.

The setting sun floods tower, roof, and streets with a sudden fiery radiance of light. Gradually the glow fades from the heavens, and the pure, chrysoprased tints of the Italian twilight succeed. Then the Duomo bell rings out on the air, deep, rich, and sonorous in tone, lapsing slowly to silence once more. Florence rests in the shadow of her past, as does the stranger within her gates.

CHAPTER II.

A FLORENCE WINDOW.

“WE live in two worlds,—a world of thought and a world of sight.”

The street is full of memories. At the corner yonder is the famous Tabernacle of the Five Lamps. The Academy of Fine Arts, formerly the Hospital of San Matteo, flanks the Piazza of St. Mark. Michelangelo's David, fashioned out of the block of marble left over from the Duomo, stands in the rotunda, forever displaced from significant guardianship of the gates of the Palazzo Vecchio, as the majestic sentinel of centuries. Will the dark and silent halls of the Academy, filled with grave Madonnas of Cimabue, richly draped saints by Botticelli, mystical Apostles and Magdalenes of Perugino, and whole garlands of Fra Angelico's angels, blooming in cold and sombre inner rooms, ever cease to be haunted by enthusiastic youth of other lands, intent on carrying away some of its treasures in copies?

The halo of a more or less mythical interest rests on Verrocchio's severe Christ and Baptist, with the charming celestial form on the left, attributed to his pupil, Leonardo da Vinci. Did Verrocchio cast aside his brush forever, after contemplating the softness and grace of the attendant angel executed by Leonardo, aware of the youth's genius, and subsequently adhere to the chisel?

Scholars of all nationalities flock to this school of design, having for escutcheon three garlands of oak, olive,

and laurel, with the motto : *Levan di terra al cielo il nostro intelletto*.

Donatello once dwelt in the Street of the Watermelon opposite the suppressed convent of San Niccolò.

Farther on is the Niccolini Theatre, where *débutantes* from Russia, England, and America occasionally sing in opera, while at other times drama, comedy, and the magicians of legerdemain hold a stage first organized by a company of young men in the seventeenth century, after the suppression of their club in the Uffizi. These ardent amateurs, adopting as their emblem a bombshell about to burst, and the name of the Academy of the *Infoncati*, gave representations before their patron, Don Lorenzo, son of Ferdinand I., as modern society finds diversion in posing on the boards of miniature private theatres, or beneath the velvet curtains of drawing-rooms, to recite some piquant French comedetta.

After the death of Don Lorenzo the house in the Via del Cocomero was taken, and became in course of time the Niccolini Theatre, in honor of the modern poet, when the Foscari had been here represented.

The threads are manifold in the twisted cable of street. That line of massive palaces opposite reminds one of Mr. Ruskin's words : " You may read the character of men, as of nations, in their art, as in a mirror. A man may hide from you himself, or misrepresent in every other way ; but he cannot in his work ; there, be sure you have him to the inmost. If the work is a cobweb, you know it was made by a spider ; if a honeycomb, by a bee ; a worm-cast is thrown by a worm, and a nest wreathed by a bird."

The Ricasoli property dominates the roofs, as the name does the street, furnishing a thread of interest in Florentine history, if the student is inclined to follow genealogical root and branch of an ancient race.

Pious ladies Ricasoli there were long ago, who endowed

monasteries with their inherited wealth, and retired to nunneries themselves on occasion, thus emulating the religious zeal of the Countess Mathilda of Tuscany.

Doughty knights Ricasoli there have been; with merchants dealing in wool, and settling in the town; pages of the Medici retinue; one lad instructed in mathematics and philosophy by such a tutor as Galileo; cavaliers of the order of Saint Stephen; archbishops and priests of the new company of the Jesuits; and thence, through the Bourbon, grand-ducal reigns, to the patriot of our day decorated by the King of United Italy, Victor Emanuel, with the collar of the Annunziata.

A noble name, deserving to reign over our Street of the Watermelon, the Ricasoli possess no charm equal to the suggestiveness of that narrow window of the *Cantina*, where the wicker flasks of oil and wine, those graceful bubbles of Tuscan industry, may be doled out to the grateful citizen by the steward.

The flasks are the harvest of country estates in the Chianti region, and the castle villa of Brolio, now noted for its vintage rather than for being the most strongly fortified mansion in Tuscany, prepared to defy French and Spanish armies, or the hosts of rival Siena and Lucca in the Middle Ages.

Francesco Redi, physician educated at Pisa, who sang his celebrated dithyrambics to Bacchus, might have extolled the grapes of the Brolio vineyards as well as bestowed the praise, "Montepulciano is the king of wines."

Quaint and musty volume, Redi's "Bacco in Toscana," having as frontispiece the portrait of the author, wearing a magnificent curled wig such as no modern author can boast! We smile, as future generations will marvel at our conceits, in reading the notes explanatory of the use of a new beverage in England known as tea, with mention of another fluid called cider, and still another innovation

on the continent, coffee, obtained from the Arabs, — decoctions doubtless injurious in comparison with the generous Italian wines.

Patriarchal phases linger in the Flower City, amid change and innovation. Is an "infernal ball" thrown from a window of the Via Nazionale on the populace celebrating the escape of King Humbert from assassination at Naples? — a cry for the Misericordia rises above the pealing of the trumpets, as it has clamored, in disaster, for six hundred years. Does the father and bread-winner of the family sicken of fever in the autumn, imbibed from the mouldy well of the court adjacent to his cobbler's stall; or the son, an apprentice to the trade of mosaic-worker, whose nights are devoted to strolling about the streets, twanging guitar and mandolin, in company with other youth, and slender, sallow daughter, clad in flimsy gown for the Sunday walk along the Arno bank to the Cascine in the piercing *tramontana* wind, suffer a lung congestion, — the frequent *mal di petto*? — there is the hospital ready to receive them, founded by worthy Folco Portinari, father of Dante's Beatrice, at the suggestion of his servant, Monna Tessa, whose presence in ward and cloister seems to still smile benevolently on each newcomer to her precincts.

Certain old palaces sell the oil and wine of their farms to citizens through the little wicket. The world changes; the landmarks of tradition disappear; and the folk-lore of the peasantry is dying away to silence in all countries, even as botanists state that flowers become extinct before emigrant plants brought by man.

Where, save in Florence, does the steward vend the oil and wine through the wicket of the palace wall; the populace still call for aid from the Misericordia, in public calamity, the band of black-robed brothers traversing the town with bier or litter; Santa Maria Nuova receive the

latest patient, not into the commonplace municipal hospital of other localities, but within the portal of good Monna Tessa? We may muse at leisure on the growth of the town, in the open window, from the camp of the Roman general in the field of flowers, and the Fiesolan weekly market, held in the space around the Temple of Mars, now the Baptistery, to the splendors which astonished Ariosto, who exclaimed,—

“While gazing on thy villa-studded hills,
’T would seem as though the earth grew palaces,
As she is wont by nature to bring forth
Young shoots, and leafy plants, and flowery shrubs.”

To formulate even a transient, mental comparison of the features of social development may resemble the foundations and successive stages of Giotto’s Tower.

There was an age of leather, the time of simplicity and sobriety lamented by Dante, when the citizens were reliable and virtuous. Dwellings and manners were rude. The household furniture consisted of the bride’s chest and a few stools; the ornaments of the walls were trophies and weapons, wherewith to arm the retinue of serfs and dependants. One large fire prepared the frugal meals, and the family gathered near the chimney on winter evenings in baronial fashion. Husband and wife ate from the same trencher, while the servants held torches, candles of wax or tallow being unknown. Wine was used sparingly, and not in summer. Men wore leather cloaks, or woollen garments without fur, and women simple raiment. Maidens married on slender dowries, and were contented with a tunic at home, or a cassock and linen robe abroad. The narrow casements were protected from cold by wooden shutters, and a screen shielded the inmates from the heat. The pride of the father was in his horses and arms, and the strength of the lofty tower built at an angle of the

mansion, entered by a steep stairway, with loophole in the masonry, balcony, scaffolding, and parapet ready to bristle with lances, boar-spears, and cross-bows in defence. A store of corn seemed riches. Good old times, praised by Cacciaguida : —

“ I saw Bellincion Berti walk abroad
In leather girdle, and a clasp of bone,
And, with no artificial coloring on her cheeks,
His lady leave the glass. The sons I saw
Of Nerli and of Vechio, well content
With unrobed jerkin, and their good dames handling
The spindle and the flax.”

An age of wool succeeded, with dealings in Pyrenean fleeces, and the skilful redressing of cloths of France and England. Grave magistrates banqueted on boiled partridge, tripe, and a plate of sardines. Wool-dressing and banking led to brocade in time.

Saint Damien had already found occasion to reprove the clergy for luxury. The priesthood were accused of scenting the holy water with Indian perfumes, of decking their chambers with curious hangings, and covering the choir-stalls of churches with tapestries. Royal purple was scorned, as a single color, coverlets being dyed like the rainbow ; while honest sheep and lambs were rejected in favor of the furs of foreign lands, — ermine, sables, marten, and fox.

Florence was a free city, with all offices open to each citizen. The germ of strict probity, according to the statutes, bore fruit in the rapid development of the relations of the *botteghe*, and the *fondaco*, thirty thousand workmen at set wages having been employed by such proprietors as the Capponi, the Ridolfi, Pucci, and Corsini. The Arno capital had agents at Paris, as had the Genoese at Nîmes, while the fairs held at Beaucaire, Forcalquier, and Troyes

were of great importance in the extension of this branch of industry.

The portrait of Michele di Lando, wool-comber and patriot, was exhibited in public each year, at the Assumption of the Virgin. The Guild-hall of the Arte della Lana, in the Canonica of Or San Michele, had for arms a lamb, with a flag and a comb, and the Lily above in a blue field. The device of the Calimala, venders of French cloth, was a gold eagle standing on a bale of wool, in a red field. Rivalling Pisa, Genoa, Siena, and Lucca in manufactures, Florence is said to have resembled the Dutch at that period.

If Bellincion Berti be accepted as the type of the leather period, Agnolo Pandolfini embodies the virtues of the wool era, the excellent burgher author of the well-known treatise on the government of the family, and hospitable master of the villa at Signa, where Pope Eugenius IV. was entertained. Pandolfini's maxim was, "We own in this world only our souls, our bodies, and our time."

Then ensued the full flowering of the age of silk. The art of silk weaving, known to the Greeks before the twelfth century, had been introduced into Spain by the Arabs, and flourished at Almeria and Lisbon, whence it spread to Genoa and Lucca. Count Roger II., of Sicily, plundered Corfu, Corinth, Thebes, Cephalonia, and Athens, and brought away silk workers among the slaves settled in the royal palace at Palermo.

Charles of Anjou, accompanied by his Provençal knights in plumed helmets and gold collars, conquering Naples in 1266, is held responsible for the setting of evil fashions to other cities. Linen and wool were speedily replaced by velvet, taffetas, crimson silk lined with miniver, and necklaces of emeralds and diamonds.

Sacchetti found the dresses of the Florentine dames too low, or rising to an absurd height above the ears. Young

girls were bold, and wore little hoods fringed with gold and pearls. Young men sported long hair, and clothing which resembled stockings for tightness.

These strictures of the mediæval chronicler on the follies of the day furnish an echo to the strain of Lucian of Samosata, and a prelude to the castigations of modern satirists. In vain serious rulers rebuked the ladies for their coronets, rich tresses, and stuffs, even limiting to twelve the clasps of their waist-belts. Emulation of other capitals, noted for luxury, held full sway. How about the baronial trencher and later frugal fare now? Capons, peacocks, and platters of meat, garnished with almonds and spices, tempted to gluttony in feasting. In Lent, roasted pike, served with mustard, salted eels, figs, and sweets, solaced the penitent, temptingly arrayed with fine linen, silver plate, Venetian glass, and the most beautiful specimens of goldsmith's work in *niello* and enamelled vessels. Furniture obtained in trade with Flanders, Spain, and France adorned the mansions, together with the statues of contemporary Italian sculptors, and the wood-work of the Del Tasso in heavily beamed ceiling and wainscot. The Arte della Seta in the Via Por Santa Maria had for arms a red door, closed, on a white ground.

The candle was burned right merrily at both ends! How gorgeous was the crimson brocade woven by Florentine looms at a date when the youth invited the damsels to the May dances, held in *loggia* and open square, wearing the garlands of Ghirlandajo on their heads, and changing their raiment between the dances. The fame of these tissues spread farther than the Via de' Velluti. Barbara von Cilly, wife of the Emperor Sigismund, once sent her people with two hundred florins and three bars of gold, wherewith to purchase the stuff.

Banking enterprises, a new system of bills of exchange, loans to the Pope and foreign sovereigns, and a money-

changer's co-operation, with such coat-of-arms as gold coins placed side by side on a red ground, resulted in usury, with attendant deceit and fraud. Impoverished families may still derive sad satisfaction from the bankruptcy of ancestors in the failure of Edward III. of England to repay his loans.

Filippo Strozzi is the best representative of the splendor, effeminacy, and vice of the silken time, which has endured in the degeneracy of our own day. The fleece of wool and the tiny cocoon of silk were the elements of which the web of Florentine history was largely woven.

The artists made of Florence the flower which, "when fully blown, instead of withering on the stalk, turned to stone." The life of the artists is the fountain, pure and sparkling, of wit, folly, and wisdom, of which each generation drinks with fresh interest and amusement.

We behold the great men whose works are familiar to us in other lands, as forming a part of such different surroundings in museums, public galleries, and the cherished collections of engravings of the home circle, here indulging in the pranks of the Bottega, and the repartee of public pleasantries. Humorous Giotto, with his heart of the peasant and his soul of the artist, draws the circle with one sweep of the brush, charged with red paint. Simple-minded Donatello suspends his money in a basket from the ceiling, for the convenience of his friends, and supported by the Medici, is followed to the tomb by all the town.

We behold them in the young comrades, Ghiberti and Donatello, visiting Rome, and searching the ruins for classical antiquities, when the Romans suspected them of delving for hidden wealth.

More noble still is the contemplation of the climbing of men by "their dead selves to better things" and higher effort.

Benedetto da Majano, wood-carver, unpacking his richly inlaid coffers in the presence of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, found them dropping in pieces from the effects of sea-damp on the voyage, and turned to the use of marble, as a more durable material, and gained a higher rank of excellence as a sculptor.

Benvenuto Cellini, the magician, at work on chalices, enamelled vases, and jewelled cope-buttons, when praised for the cap medal he was executing, by Michelangelo, was touched with a noble discontent of gem-setting and the exquisite salt-cellars and wrought caskets of his fancy, and may have first dreamed of the Perseus at the moment.

The artists solved problems of linear perspective, learned to fix rectangular planes in perfect order, and to set figures in proportion and advantageous situation. They studied anatomy in the cemeteries, contemplating the muscles and lines of the human form as Luca Signorelli copied the corpse of his son. They applied geometrical laws to composition, projected shadows, and learned the comparative values of light and shade with the aid of artificial illumination in dark spaces, while precision of drawing and delicacy of touch resulted from early apprenticeship to the goldsmith, as the statuesque pose and system of moulding draperies from application to sculpture in bronze. Color passed through the crucible of trial of many lives before attaining perfection with Leonardo da Vinci. Whole families rose to fame, and all longed to embellish the mother city, Rome. How real their presence in this quarter of an ancient town!

Giotto, going to San Gallo one day, paused in the Street of the Watermelon to tell a story to a friend, when a pig, running away, knocked him down. The Raphael of early art rose, and instead of abusing the animal sacred to Saint Anthony, declared that the pig was right, for he had already made fame and fortune from the bristles of

a race to which he had never given as much as a cup of broth.

Cosimo Rosselli was born here. Did Cimabue live in our narrow way, with his pupil Giotto? Did Donatello actually die in the Via Cocomero? Was it in yonder house, where the five lamps still swing in the Tabernacle, that roguish Buffalmacco frightened Andrea Tafi into covering his head with the sheet instead of rising too early, on winter mornings, by means of the beetles, carrying lighted tapers on their backs, trotting across the floor in guise of evil spirits?

Buffalmacco was praised by Vasari as a good colorist, yet he remains better known to posterity for the execution of the order of the haughty Ghibelline bishop, Guido of Arezzo, by depicting the Lion of Florence devouring the Imperial Eagle, instead of the reverse, rather than as decorating the Badia of Settimo, or the Ognissanti. The memory of his giving to the impatient people of Perugia their patron saint, Ercolano, crowned with a diadem of fishes, or of his dressing a figure to place before the frescos in the convent of the nuns of Faenza, while idle elsewhere, as well as persuading the sisters that sacramental wine was necessary in the mixing of his colors, lingers after his works at Cortona, Florence, and Arezzo have faded and vanished.

The modern Florentine artists perpetuate the spirit of hoax and jest in their club, — the “Circolo Artistico” of a neighboring street. Possibly the *burlette* have lost some element of genuine fun in a more artificial age of gas and electric light.

The summoning of a fire brigade on April Fool's Day, with real, practicable flames visible issuing from the club windows, loses in comparison with simple Calendrino drawing near to listen to the discourse of waggish Buffalmacco with Maso del Saggio in the Baptistry, while

examining a new tabernacle above an altar. The gigantic paper fish of April first, hung from the casement, has none of the richness of detail of that earlier scene. Maso gravely described the locality whence came the precious stones used in the tabernacle as Berlinzone, a city of the Baschi, where the inhabitants tied the vines with sausages, and a goose might be bought for a penny, with a gosling into the bargain, while the mountains were made of grated Parmesan cheese, and the river flowed with pure Malmsley wine. The people did nothing but eat macaroons. Poor Calendrino, eagerly attentive, would fain seek the land of macaroons, being only deterred by the thousands of leagues of distance, Berlinzone proving to be farther off than the Abruzzi. These precious stones, too! Ah, truly! One sort was made into mill-stones, whole mountains of emeralds existing, larger than Monte Morello. Then the casual hint was dropped that the other stone, the heliotrope of the lapidary, renders invisible the possessor, and was plentiful on the plains of the Mugnone. Calendrino scoured the country and filled his house with worthless, black stones, until he was asked if he intended to build, and became the mockery of his friends.

Comparison with the past tends to dwarf modern talent. Thus, the most skilful culinary effort in ball-room suppers, served by the Café Doney and Giacosa, cannot equal in flavor the banquets of the Society of the Cauldron, given in the habitation of the eccentric sculptor Rustici, on the Piazza Annunziata, where, embittered by failure in art, he kept strange pets, — a hedgehog, a raven, and snakes.

Twelve artists, musicians, and goldsmiths brought four guests each and provided an original dish for the supper table, which was placed in a huge cauldron, with the handle serving for chandelier. Sculptors moulded pastry into classical shapes, and architects built temples of jellies and cakes. The goldsmith Robetta fashioned an anvil and

accoutrements out of a calf's head, while a painter treated roasted pig as a scullery maid spinning.

Andrea del Sarto brought hither his celebrated design of the Baptistery, which has descended to us entire by means of many chroniclers.

Do we not still partake of that octagonal temple, with sausage columns, cornices of sugar, bases and capitals of the indispensable Parmesan cheese, with mosaic pavement of gelatine, and tribune formed of a cake of marchpane? Do not the roasted thrushes of choristers, clad in pork, gathered around the reading-desk of cold veal, holding the choir-book, with pepper-corn notes, open wide their beaks for our delectation, guided by ortolans, and the two pigeon canons, in mantles of red beetroot?

These men kept brain and eye unclouded for the most part amid the petty brawls of party strife, and even the great disasters of their age. The sublime summit of artistic abstraction was attained when Perugino and Raphael worked in the studio, immortalizing the beautiful and wicked Baglioni as the archangels of their pictures, while the streets of Perugia ran with blood.

What glimpses of character are afforded by the letters and documents still extant! How vivid the anger of fussy, indignant brother David that Domenico Ghirlandajo should be expected to subsist on water soup and hard cakes by the monks of Vallombrosa, while working for them, which led the irate kinsman to emphasize his displeasure by breaking the tureens on the head of the attendant friar! How fresh the fun of Mariotto Albertinelli and his pupils, stealing the food of the devout monks from the sliding panels of the cloister cells of the *Certosa*, and the confusion and mutual recriminations of the brethren in consequence, — each recluse accusing his neighbor of unwarrantable gluttony! Uccelli, the man of much study and small fruit, who labored at night to perfect perspective, fled from the service of the

monks of San Miniato because fed too exclusively on cheese. Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael, in his dedicatory epistle to Guidabaldo da Montefeltro, stated that having tried various ways of getting a livelihood, he gave himself at last to the wonderful art of painting, of which he did not disdain to be called a follower.

The amiable attitude of the Medici to all artists, from the elder Cosimo to his most effeminate descendant, and their easy intercourse with gifted subjects, afforded a fine quality in consummate ambition. They laughed together over the backslidings of Fra Filippo Lippi, who exclaimed penitently, possibly after the abduction of Spinetta Buti, "If there is a wretched monk in Florence, it is I!"

Benozzo Gozzoli, painting in the Medici Chapel of the Riccardi Palace, addressed Piero de' Medici at the Villa Careggi: —

MY DEAREST FRIEND, — I informed your Magnificence in a previous letter that I am in need of fifty florins, and begged you to advance them to me, for now is the time to buy corn and many other things that I want, whereby I shall save, and get rid of a load of care. I also reminded you to send to Venice for some ultramarine, for in the course of the week one wall will be finished, and for the other I shall need ultramarine. The brocades and other things can then be finished, as well as the figures.

Artist and patron have long been dust, but the brocades stiff with gold, and the ultramarine, remain to us in the quaint procession of the Nativity wending their way along the wall of the chapel.

These men are so near the Florence Window that you may extend a hand to them, and yet centuries divide the living from the dead.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHRINE OF THE FIVE LAMPS.

FLORENCE possesses few more noble memories than those readily associated with the Shrine of the Five Lamps. Savonarola traversed this narrow street when he quitted the monastery of San Marco to preach in the Duomo. These precincts have echoed to the footsteps of Michelangelo, Fra Bartolommeo, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, or Cronaca, religious fervor kindled in the soul of each by the eloquent words of the reformer.

The Tabernacle contains the miraculous picture of the Madonna and Child, by Andrea Tafi. The mosaic is usually concealed by a white curtain drawn across the surface, inside of the sash of glass. Precious relic of shrines of the highway and town thoroughfare, the Street of the Watermelon would lack an important feature if robbed of the *Tabernacolo delle Cinque Lampade*.

These shrines become every year more rare. Often painted by the best masters, and framed in marble, carved with much care and elegance of design, they are now chiefly relegated to the safe-keeping of museums, when not destroyed by the elements.

Our wayside shrine endures, with the mosaic shrouded by curtain and sash, and the massive lamps swaying on their rusty chains beneath the projecting arch of roof. Is it spared the improvements of modern change because a pious lady, long dead, left money to light the lamps at

evening, when a tremulous ray from the brimming oil cups is shed abroad ?

The tales of Boccaccio and Sacchetti have been interwoven about our Tabernacle in the past. These authors, as accomplished scholars of their time, may no longer invent romances to amuse the ear of a Queen of Naples, and the beautiful Fiammetta, yet reality and fable become strangely blended in the places described by them. It is difficult to separate the characters of Boccaccio, the narrator, who was the source whence Shakspeare drew "All's Well that Ends Well," Chaucer his "Knight's Tale," and Keats his "Pot of Basil," from the living personages of the day.

Andrea Tafi certainly existed, a sober workman rather than a brilliant genius, and a contemporary of Cimabue. Tafi went to Venice, where the Greeks were working in the Church of St. Mark. He brought back with him to Florence the Master Apollonio, who taught him to bake the glass cubes, and prepare the stucco, with such result as the mosaics of the Baptistery dome, with powers, thrones, and dominions, if not the Byzantine Christ above.

Andrea Tafi once dwelt in the house still adorned by the Shrine. His waggish pupil, Buffalmacco, also lived there in the prime of his roguish boyhood. The little palace beyond was built by Buontalenti. Then why not Master Simon da Villa, doctor of physic, who returned from studying at Bologna, clad in scarlet robes and ermine, and rented a house in the Street of the Watermelon ?

The learned doctor wished to learn all about his neighbors, and especially who were those two poor but merry souls, the painters Buffalmacco, and his comrade of the studio, Bruno. The friends in mischief played countless pranks on Master Simon while showing him the town, obtaining him many a rating from his wife for the sorry plight in which he returned from these excursions. The

good man showered benefits on his tormentors, and often invited them to dine or sup with him. Bruno adorned the mansion with frescos, depicting a battle of cats and rats in a gallery, and placing the Agnus Dei above a chamber door.

Our Lady of September! — *La Donna di Settembre!* The curtain is drawn aside for a season on this occasion, and the dark Madonna of Andrea Tafi gazes forth on the Street of the Watermelon, behind the screen of glass window and swaying lamps, sheltered by the projecting arch of roof. Flowers in a china vase have been placed on the external ledge, — dahlias, asters, and a pale rosebud or two.

Languid summer heat, blended with a certain richness of deepening autumn tints, lingers about the town. There is a mysterious charm in the unveiling of the Shrine during this month. The Madonna belongs to the quaint miracle-pictures of the land, about which legends gather from some dim tradition of sanctity.

On the Mediterranean shore boats containing the fishermen and their families have been gliding over the calm sea since dawn from Via Reggio and the Bocca d'Arno, in the direction of Leghorn, to join the throng toiling up the height of Montenero to the shrine of the sister Madonna of the dark picture there treasured in the church. This year no cholera cloud menacing the coast leads to government interference with crowds gathering about this sanctuary to honor our Lady of September with feasting, noise, and revelry.

Possibly the tabernacles of Mediterranean seaports, beacons of home to the sailors on return voyages, and associated with many phases of panic of fear in time of pestilence or public calamity, when sought and borne forth in procession to allay fear, may possess more interest of picturesque phases in a simple and superstitious people than the street shrine.

Andrea Tafi's work remains a shadow in the brightness of noonday, and yet the spot is replete with souvenirs of the past, of which the present cannot rob it.

Town and thoroughfare may bask in the full radiance of life, but with the shadows of evening the five lamps are lighted. Burn on, little twinkling stars of flame, gems in the surrounding darkness! Do not the lives of those who have lived their day in the Street of the Watermelon form the true mosaic, — bit cemented into bit, in symmetrical pattern, to shine in imperishable colors for all time, and enshrined in the years?

The wayfarer on the busy and crowded highway of the world may still pause a moment in thoughtful contemplation of the shrine, questioning the silent thoroughfare, the vast cathedral pile beyond, the depths of his own soul. Watchman, what of the night?

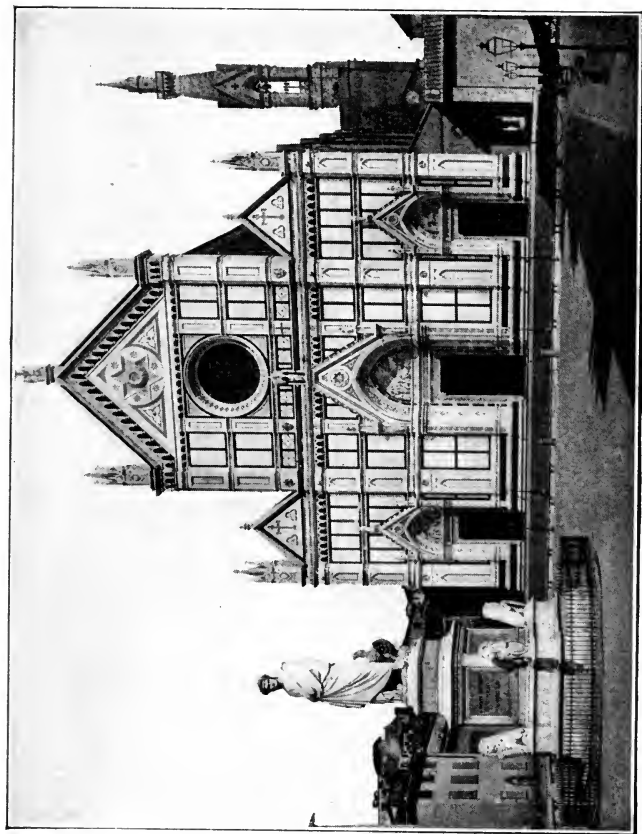
CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH TOWERS.

THE mingled voices of the bells float in the casement at all hours. Now a hurried pulsation of brazen throats announces the mysterious passing away from the crowded thoroughfares of the soul claimed by death. Now a saint's day is marked by the peal of vibrating belfries at intervals, from daybreak to nightfall, the mere, whirring clamor of noisy clappers intent on disturbing the tardy slumbers of irritable nerves, and throbbing on the weary brains of invalids. "Never attempt to live in the shadow of an Italian campanile unless you wish to be driven mad by the jangle of the bells," warns the valetudinarian, mindful of disturbed rest at the Lakes, Varese, near a Venetian *campo* or Florentine *piazza*.

Again the chimes of many turrets swing slowly back to the ebb of silence, and the sweet notes mark the Ave Maria of dawn, the full flood of noon, and the vespers, or Nona, with a certain solemnity of impressiveness. All joys and all calamities have been recorded for the Flower City by her bells.

The page of history will ever glow afresh in the minds of new generations, the valiant Piero Capponi tearing up the treaty before the eyes of the astonished French king, Charles VIII., with the presumably scandalized French army looking on, and the memorable defiance of the note of Gallic trumpets leading to an attack on the town. "And we will ring our bells!"





Truly Florence has rung her bells through all the changing years ever since, and has stood unconquered, although the outburst of genuine indignation on the part of the brave Capponi was decided to be the reverse of diplomatic, even by the chroniclers of his own time, there being no precedent in history for his blunt speech: *Voi darette nelle vostre trombe, e noi nelle nostre campane.*

To dwell for a season within range of the sonorous music leads to a certain sentiment of sympathy with the modern Florentine, who, condemned to make the tour of the world to recruit health, expressed regret to lose sight of "our campanile" even for a year. Such foster-children as the stranger dwelling within her gates may experience similar attachment to the gracious city of the Arno bank, and all those slender towers rising through the silvery mists of the early morning far above the russet tiles of crowded roofs and occasional *loggia*.

In the Street of the Watermelon the mingled tones of the bells penetrate the window, but the towers remain invisible. Possibly the absence to sight renders each only the more suggestive to meditation. One may ponder on their history by the hour, if so disposed, while the ear guides thought to their base.

Giotto's Campanile, so near at hand, dominates street and window, as the great bell booms out over the listening town. Santa Croce takes up the echo in a higher note, after an interval; then San Marco, San Lorenzo, Santa Maria Novella, and the Church of Ognissanti clash in unison, with a more distant tinkle of little Santa Lucia on the Prato beyond, while across the river, Santo Spirito and the Carmine make their own harmonies, with additional, airy vibrations from San Miniato. When these great giants pause to take breath, as it were, a whole rhythm of minor notes become audible, thin, cracked, and rusty perhaps, emanating from smaller sanctuaries as the rustle of springs

and brooks in the woods assert their own existence in a subdued murmur, when the tempest has swept the forest trees overhead, and rent the mountain-side. Still more charming to the attentive ear is the fainter echo of country bells, taking up the challenge of the hour far away among the purple slopes of the hills, up the Casentino, on the Chianti hills, at the base of Monte Morello, or down the wide-spread *pianura* in the direction of Pisa and the sea.

What meaning had the bells of Florence to the soul of Savonarola in moments of meditation?

I. THE AVE MARIA OF DAWN.

Time and season have no part in the beauty, grace, and harmony of Giotto's Campanile. The fairy structure belongs to the day and to the night alike, and remains untarnished by the centuries, the wonder of the sunrise as well as of the sunset.

When the Emperor Charles V. beheld this marvel of architectural skill, with shrewd, imperial calculation of its having cost the Florentine republic the sum of eleven thousand florins, he is reputed to have said that the city should keep the precious object of art in a wrapping, and uncover the gleaming marbles at intervals of several years, when the event would attract a throng of strangers. The citizens did not adopt the royal suggestion. What countless multitudes from the four quarters of the globe have since gazed upon the tower! The exalted of the earth, a linked chain of sovereigns, wearing the crown of power more or less uneasily, have paused to admire this shrine. From the powerful Charles V., weighing the cost in golden florins to free citizens, lavished on a single church tower in the embellishment of their city, to Queen Victoria witnessing the spring festival of lighting the car of Ceres in

the Piazza of the Duomo, from the Bigallo, a few seasons ago, surrounded by minor rulers, such as Queen Natalia of Servia, or the Emperor of Brazil, with German and Russian princes attendant, and that shadowy old couple, the King and Queen of Würtemberg, in the background of country seclusion in the villa at Quarto, a gallery of historical portraits might be made.

To the more modest, artistic tourist, red guidebook in hand, this revelation of the beautiful must ever be the way-side sacrament of Canon Kingsley, to be treasured in remembrance for the remainder of life, — sharing the reveries of the pipe in some tranquil German town; gleaming swiftly in a displaced photograph on the table during the long winter night of Scandinavia; checking for a moment the rapid current of western life, as if a spray of Dante's purple-black lilies were held across the path of the American in guise of magician's wand.

"Giotto's Campanile at Florence! Do you recollect comparing the softly blended colors to the plumage on a dove's breast on that September morning when we first saw it together? That must have been twenty years ago, and you were a bride," muses Contentment in the domestic circle.

"Giotto's Campanile at Florence! Who sought this water-color drawing in the depths of the locked portfolio? Yes; there it stands, with all the saints and angels in their niches, quite unchanged. I should shrink from revisiting the spot. He was with me then, and now I am alone," meditates Sorrow, white-featured and withered.

Youth exclaims, "Ah, when may I travel in the vacation, and visit Italy, pausing to look at Giotto's Campanile?"

The human tide flows on to other lands, and even the Florentine who has emerged from the Baptistery opposite

in the swaddling-clothes of infancy, anointed with all suitable rites of religion, crosses the square as a stripling, is speedily a man, and becomes old, gray, infirm; yet Giotto's Tower stands unchanged. Is it imperishable? Will it endure, bathed by winter rains, dried by the purifying if piercing *tramontana* wind, keen from the heights of Apennine, steeped in summer sunshine long after we also are dust?

One may quit the Street of the Watermelon at any hour, and skirting the corner of the Cathedral, where the public carriages gather with their bags of hay and litter of straw, while the pigeons of the roof alight on the pavement, come upon the campanile, polished to the lustre of precious marbles in the storm, flushed with the rosy glow of the departing sun, shedding shafts of golden splendor down adjacent streets, glorified by the radiance of noon in manifold tints of skilful mosaic of stones, transfigured by silvery beams of the moon to a fabric, temple, or tomb of snow. Still another phase of contemplation is in store for the wanderer. In languid weather, when clouds are tawny, the Arno a brimming, yellow flood, and the squares clammy with moisture, the hot, *scirocco* wind renders the human countenance sallow, and stains with mildew blight palaces and churches, then the campanile soars heavenward unstained by the blight of a universal murkiness, becomes a shaft of pearl against the relief of pervading gray tones, disclosing at the same time the fine lines of minute workmanship, resembling the famous *niello* work of the ancient craft of the town: the column seems then to be engraved.

Is there not an element of cruelty, even of mockery, in the unchangeable loveliness of the belfry, while mortal woes break in futile ripples of grief and passion at the base? You cannot wring tears of sympathy from stone. The gust of weeping past, there is consolation to be de-

rived from the serene harmony, the enduring strength of the campanile. Perhaps brave Giotto put his own soul into the design. Did he dream of this glorious fulfilment still adorning the town in our day, when he paced the Street of the Watermelon? The shepherd boy discovered on the country-side drawing one of his own sheep on a rock with a bit of slate, by that earliest patron of art, Cimabue, had grown to such achievement as the adornment of Assisi and Padua, and neared his end. If he walked through our street, absorbed in thought of the project still in store for his energies, he must have also skirted the angle of the Cathedral, passed before the main door, and reached the site of his own tower. Visible to his mind, in completion, the shaft was scarcely the broken rainbow of a dissolving storm-cloud to the town, and yet confidence in his ability to erect a campanile worthy of the Arno capital was so universal a sentiment with the community that he was given the commission.

The July day is hot; and the sun's rays beat on the roofs like molten fire. Viewed from the olive-clad heights of the surrounding hills, the town possesses no beauty of atmosphere in such a season, and, the earlier mists of heat rolled back down the Val d'Arno to hang over Prato and adjacent villages like a stifling white curtain, Florence stands withered and gray of aspect, with Fiesole, and the more remote slopes of arid and ashy hues. The winds are at rest, only the scorching *scirocco* and boisterous *libeccio* sweep up from the Mediterranean, or the still more irritating Adriatic currents blow over the easterly ridges of intervening Apennine. Within the gates of the town cool nooks may be found. To linger in the embrasure of the Florence Window, inhaling the fragrance of the flowers, is to realize that summer is the bountiful, beautiful presence of a goddess, with flowing mantle of many shades of green. and tunic white, as the old masters

liked to depict her in frescos. How the populace expands and revels in the heat, emerging from dark streets and crooked stairways to warm fingers recently empurpled by cruel chilblains and winter frost in a blander temperature! Languor may result in the autumn, but the suffering of physical discomfort belongs to winter.

The signora who dwells in the shadow of the Shrine of the Five Lamps departs from her dark and narrow abode, attired in cream-colored tissues, and with gold embroideries on her bonnet. She is a fine type of matron, with abundant black tresses, but she does not move the admiration of the street in the least by her sumptuous apparel, which should belong to the carriage rather than to the curbstone. She is well known to deserve the reproach of past centuries on the Florentine women, and spend all the money of her harassed spouse on her back. The street is a little world, and praises, ridicules, and satirizes the residents with unsparing severity, as gossip circulates from the cook of the marchese to the groom of the foreign baron, and eddies about the shop of the vegetable-woman in the prattle of laundresses, nurses, and maids, whose feminine tongues have been compared to the vibrations of the aspen leaf. The city is a little world, scrutinized under the microscope of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, where trifling events become momentous, and far too much heed is given to unsparing criticism of one's neighbor, in contrast with those vast capitals where the seas of human life flow in great, successive waves, each obliterating the sand ripple of a predecessor.

The signora spreads her creamy draperies like a gigantic butterfly, and marshalling her little brood of children, as smart as ribbons, feathers, broad hats, and tiny boots can make their nimble little bodies, with maids in attendance, and a *balia*, carrying the baby, enveloped in white lace and embroideries, sallies forth to the *piazza*.

The vegetable-woman, pausing on the threshold of her shop, shakes her head; and the laundress, who is chaffering over a cabbage, purses up her lips, nods, and then whispers in the ear of her companion some slander such as slowly soaks into the mind of the recipient like water in marshy land, according to Confucius.

The dame goes forth, unscathed by scandal, and will pause in the torrid rays of the sun to greet a friend, unmindful to shelter her head with a parasol, or having forgotten the useful article, the chances are she will escape sunstroke; yet it also happens that you subsequently hear of her as stricken with fever, and jumping from a window into the well of the court in a fit of delirium, to the desolation of her afflicted husband, and the bereavement of all who knew her.

The old cabman shrugs his shoulders, and cracks the whip he carries in his right hand, as he returns to his stand on the Piazza of San Marco, where his horse, a patient white animal, with meek nose in a bag of hay, awaits the custom ever more rare since the establishment of tramways. Tramways an established fact, what fate will befall the society of cabmen, who parade in political processions on occasion, with a dark steed — such as they never drive — rampant on a banner of green silk? If the tailors are to “build” the dresses of the ladies here in Italy in obedience to the feminine aspiration of the day to be as masculine as possible, what is to become of such pale and anxious little *sarte* as the maker of the signora’s yellow robe, bravely supporting a worthy husband out of employment through the failure of a flour mill at Pistoja? In turn, the flour mill was too heavily taxed for the owner to meet his expenses. If the type-writer is to set forth clearly and cleanly the ideas of a time-pressed world on rapidly multiplying sheets, how may bread be obtained by the clerks carefully trained to excel in writing and

copying, with beautiful penmanship? Truly, this is a photographic age of swift and sharp impressions and speedy accomplishment.

These questions intrude even on the drowsy tranquillity of an old street at Florence, induced by the presence of the rubicund cabman, in his shirt-sleeves, jolly, and cracking his whip, his visage somewhat too suggestive of the purple glow resulting from a liberal use of Tuscan wine. As the husband of the vegetable-woman, and deeply interested in the business, he rejoices in the nickname of the *ortolano* (vegetable-dealer) bestowed upon him with the facility of Italian towns. What befalls the displaced forces of human labor, swept aside by new inventions? One hears no more of them. The *vetturino* of the Riviera vowed vengeance on the railway, piercing the tunnels of the shore, from the heights of the defrauded Cornice road; still the iron rail endures, and the class of *vetturini* is nearly extinct. The indignant Venetian *gondoliere* carried their wrath at the introduction of little omnibus steam-craft into the city to the verge of a strike in the presence of the Queen Margherita, yet the *vaporetti* puff and shriek along the canals, and the picturesque wielder of the oar must go to the wall sooner or later. Care may lurk in the corner of the eye of the bluff *cocher*, for the venture, from a financial standpoint, of a vegetable shop is fraught with sundry anxieties. If the outlay in rent and commodities be trifling, he doubtless wishes that the account of the superb signora, who has just sallied forth, was less lengthy for daily salad and vegetables, selected by a slatternly maid, and carried home in her apron, while he fears to cut off supplies altogether, lest he is never paid. For the rest, he anathematizes the encroaching tramway in the most ingenious vocabulary of abuse possible to the lower classes of any city; but at least on this July day let us laugh and be merry, whip in hand,

while the patient white horse stands at the corner, awaiting a tardy customer.

Were the daily interests of the streets less petty and trivial formerly, when Andrea Tafi rose so early to work on his mosaics, which were destined to sparkle like gems in dim church domes? An old priest, wearing a broad beaver hat, totters past the window, and pauses to greet the antiquarian, in the act of locking his door. A small country wagon jogs along, drawn by a shaggy pony, and driven by a brown young man, with his bride at his side. The bride, with her fair hair adjusted on the top of her head, and wearing a gown of purple woollen stuff, with a mustard-yellow jacket, — for cotton fabrics do not belong to the attire of rural damsels of condition, — gazes about her with bright, astonished eyes, as she wields a huge red fan. In another moment she will have turned the corner, and Giotto's Campanile will dawn on her intelligence. She may glance at the structure with awe; only the fashionable costumes of the ladies and the shop-windows will prove far more attractive. How many generations of country brides have looked at the campanile, as their rustic equipages rattled through the city, since the July day when the painter, sculptor, mosaic designer, and architect in one began the task!

In Dante's childhood each quarter of the city was a little sphere absorbed in its own interests of life and death and circumscribed daily routine. No doubt the neighbors across the way commented on the attire of Dante's mother, — the woman who foreshadowed the greatness of her son in the imaginative quality of her own dreams. Time was when the Via del Cocomero possessed loftier elements than our modern paltry strife, the spiritual conflicts of Savonarola and his followers apart, and the donations of noble ladies Ricasoli, to found monasteries in the country and other charitable institutions.

The Cavaliere Niccolò de' Gianfigliuzzi, a descendant of Count Gangalandi, and member of one of the five families enjoying certain privileges accorded by the Marchese Ugo, founded the convent of San Niccolò, long obliterated, on the Street of the Watermelon. The circumstances are rich in suggestiveness of the age. The Cavaliere Niccolò, finding it necessary to go to Avignon to inherit property belonging to his father in the French town, and wishing, like a prudent man, to arrange his affairs at Florence first, made a testament with the provision that if his infant Giovanni, born of the lady Maria Ghita di Messer Alamanno degli Adimari, died, he substituted Jesus Christ as his heir, and would build a monastery for women of the order of the Frati Minori (Franciscans) with his wealth. Whether the infant son Giovanni died or lived, the foundations of the building were begun in 1331, and the Bishop of Florence, Francesco da Cingoli, blessed the first stone on the 25th of February, 1340, accompanying the ceremony with an indulgence of forty days. The family continued to bestow benefits on the monastery and church.

The bell of San Niccolò no longer joins the vesper notes of the city towers, but the excitement of religious revival under Savonarola invaded these sacred precincts. When the Duomo was thronged by the populace to listen to the famous Lenten sermons of the reformer, the women withdrew to the neighboring sanctuary of San Niccolò to gather up the crumbs of a tamer discourse. In addition, those subsequent tumults, when the clash of arms became audible, used in self-defence by the *Piagnoni* against the insulting throngs of their enemies, occurred on this spot.

Our Cavaliere Niccolò, of pious memory, appears to have dwelt at Avignon, under Pope Clement V., and his descendants to have followed the fortunes of the Roman court in the gay and luxurious Provençal city. The con-

vent flourished through the centuries, whether from the generosity of the exiles at Avignon in legacies, or as patronized by certain Florentine families. The ancient records assure us that on the 6th of December the *fête* of Saint Nicholas was celebrated with much pomp, and on the *Vigilia* ("Eve") the music performed by the religious procession was so excellent that "our most erudite old people" affirm they never heard better on a similar occasion. Does not the Italian celebration correspond with the Santa Klaus tide of Holland?

On the 1st of November, 1661, the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, with his wife Anna de' Medici, came to the Street of the Watermelon to hold at baptism in the Church of San Niccolò the infant daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, Count of Berwick and Leicester, and Donna Maddalena, Duchess of Aquitaine. The Grand-duke Ferdinand II., with the Grand-duchess Vittoria, and all the nobility of the Florentine court, assisted at the ceremony. The august child received the name of Carlotta Luisa. The chronicle of the July day so memorable in our quarter is quaint:—

"Great was the wonder, the fame of which spread through the world, when it was known that in Tuscany alone there were four towers, one in the water, the second in the air, the third on the earth, and the fourth always inclining yet never falling. These were the Marzocco of Leghorn, founded in the sea of Pisa; the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence, which, supported by corbels, springs from the roof, and appears to be poised in mid air; the third, the marvel of all, the tower of Santa Maria del Fiore, more wonderful than the rest, whether considered for its height, the loveliness of its marbles, the variety of its statues, and the multitude of the histories sculptured on the *bassi-rilievi* of the four sides; and the fourth, the Campanile of Pisa, which leans six braccia and a half from the perpendicular, yet stands through the centuries."

When Giotto was ordered in 1334, by the Republic, to construct an edifice, using the highest intelligence of which he was capable, the stipulation was that for magnificence, both in altitude and the quality of the work, it should surpass any labor of the sort ever undertaken, even by the Greeks and the Romans at the period of their most florid power. In conformity with this noble plan, Giotto, as a dutiful son of the Church, had the first stone of the campanile blessed on the 25th of January.

The perfume of roses lingers about the barred casement. Did roses bloom as luxuriantly on that memorable 25th of July so long ago? Did the matron of the period, enveloped in her mantle, sally forth to enjoy the show, like our handsome signora in the yellow robe, on similar occasions?

The familiar scene comes back, with the scent of flowers, and the scorching heat of the July sun. Giotto formed a procession of the clergy, and of all the *Ordini Regolari*, in the Piazza of San Giovanni, the *gonfaloniere* of Justice Maso Valori, with the priors and magistrates. The Bishop Francesco Salvestri da Cingoli blessed the foundation-stone in the presence of the Archbishop of Pisa, who, having fled from his diocese, was dwelling with his monks in Santa Maria Novella; and together with the stone were cast in some medals of gold of one-pound weight each, with the imprint of the campanile as it now stands on one side, and the arms on the other of the Lily and the Cross, with the encircling letters: "Deo Liberatori Florentina Civitas, magnificentissime propriis sumptibus fieri curavit." Then Giotto laid his foundations twenty braccia deep, with strong stone underlying, to resist the corroding action of water and possible frost; and left to the care of others, in due course of time the fair temple rose to a height of one hundred and forty-four braccia of many tinted intarsiatura of colored

marbles of delicately wrought symbols, niches, and *mandorle* up to the parapet, and such fulfilment of design as the seven bells belonging to a metropolitan church capable of ringing together in harmony in the consonance of the octave, the fifth, or a third part. The great bell was fused in 1475, and weighed eleven thousand eight hundred and seventy-five pounds, and was inscribed with the arms of the Arte della Lana, and was christened, "Madonna piena di Grazie." The mellow tones of its voice were audible at a distance of eight or ten miles.

Who that has ever heard the Duomo bell of to-day, welling up from the depths of the town to Fiesole or Bellosguardo, or borne far up the Casentino by the summer breeze, can fail to feel a personal thrill of the nearness of the calamity which befell the Madonna full of grace on the 25th of December, 1704? The item of the *Diario della Magliabecchiana* has the startling brevity of a modern telegram: "This morning Girolamo Lippi, bell-ringer of the Duomo, in sounding the Ave Maria of Dawn, ascertained that the great bell was broken, and sagging on one side, and therefore from that hour rang no more."

In October, 1705, a new bell was cast, weighing fifteen thousand eight hundred and sixty pounds, fused by the brave Cosimo Cenni, according to some authorities, or by Petri, and terminated by the foundryman Brafcocolini, as maintained by others. The Ceremoniere Marini blessed the furnace. On the 12th of December, the new bell was hung, — the Ave Maria of the Dawn!

At four o'clock of the July morning in the year 1890, the portals of the Duomo were opened as usual to all pious citizens disposed to repeat a prayer at this early hour, and the notes of the great bell pealed out over the sleeping town. Giotto and his successor, Taddeo Gaddi, sleep the sleep that knows no awakening; but the campanile once more emerged from the shadows of night to

greet another day. From base to parapet the light grew, at first wan and cold, then warming as herald of the approaching sun, until each lunette, statue, and bas-relief were fully revealed, and the whole pile was once more prepared to tell its sculptured story of the Creation, the Sciences, the Arts, and Virtues.

A young soldier, exhausted by fatigue and fever, and dust-stained, crept into the town with the break of day. A Florentine, he had come on leave from his garrison in the district of Emilia, and had walked all night. The voice of the great bell reached his failing ear, and the angels of celestial harmonies, of divine compassion, descended from the campanile, and led the boy by the hand through the still, deserted thoroughfares to the Duomo door. He entered the vast, cool temple, cast off his shoes and his hat, and sank down on a bench. Then an affrighted custodian summoned the Misericordia, and the black-robed brethren issued forth from the door of their sanctuary on the opposite side of the *piazza*, and bore the unconscious soldier away to the hospital. And still the bells rang out with a full, pulsing utterance of joy in the Ave Maria of Dawn, breathing forth peace and pity in the summer day.

II. THE MASQUERADE OF THE WINDS.

The east wind of November brings the note of Santa Croce's bell to the listening ear. Follow the Piazza of the Duomo to the Via Proconsolo, and thence gain, by the Piazza San Firenze and the Borgo dei Greci, the Square of Santa Croce. The spot is gray, dusty, and deserted, and the east wind holds full sway, sweeping down the Arno valley from the heights of Vallombrosa, and the Falterona, with sombre masses of cloud gathering above the roof of the great church at the lower extremity

of the enclosed space. Dante stands in a musing, if commanding, attitude in the centre of the *piazza*, supported by shield-bearing lions and the arms of diverse Italian cities. This monument is the tardy reparation of recognition of the poet's native city, after the lapse of some six hundred years. The majestic figure on the pedestal is a fit guardian of the temple yonder, tomb of so many illustrious dead; yet Dante seems to be pondering scornfully and sadly on the futility of human aspirations. The marble lips breathe low:—

“Naught but a gust of wind is worldly fame,
Now from this quarter, now from that arriving,
And bearing with each change a different name.”

The stone benches of the square are untenanted in the bitter weather, where women gossip together on summer evenings while the children play, or old men, wrapped in cloaks, warm shrivelled limbs in the warmth of noon on clear days of winter. These stone seats have replaced the wooden ones built here to witness the game of *calcio*, formerly played by bands of youth, unarmed, with a ball. On such a day the old houses, built by the Strozzi, Pitti, Spini, Uguccione, and Bartolini, still decorated with faded frescos, or boasting heavy wrought ironwork about portal, balcony, and casement, and massive stone carvings, have a mute and untenanted appearance. The tall brown Campanile of Santa Croce seems to gaze down on the square over the shoulder of the fresh marbles of the façade. The tower is more in harmony with the church and adjacent buildings than is the startling whiteness of the modern work, completed by the munificence of an Englishman. Many storms have beaten on the belfry since the foundation of the sacred edifice; wind, lightning, and the crash of hail have spent their combined violence of winter and summer tempests on the structure on more

than one occasion, damaging column and masonry, or bringing the whole toppling down in hopeless ruin.

A new campanile was raised in 1544, at the cost of two thousand florins, and the bells christened respectively Vittoria, Maria, and Romola. Maestro Zanobi di Ragno di Lapo was the foundryman, according to the archives of church and monastery. In 1549, another belfry is mentioned, while restorations were further effected in connection with the completed façade.

Deserted, gray, and dusty, the square is not suggestive of the scenes so rich in historical incident which have taken place here in bygone years. The east wind, bringing clouds of dust, or the merest ghostly vibration of ancient bells, recalls that on such a December day, in the season of the Nativity, pilgrim monks preached here a sermon to attentive throngs of listeners. From the now spectral band of such preachers San Bernardino of Siena, of ascetic mien, gazes at us for a moment from the shadow of his cowl, as he elevates the emblem, the monogram of Christ, once carried by him over the land to heal the strife of wars, and revive the sorrowful, — his a gift of eloquence from childhood scarcely less than that of Savonarola in his time.

From the now ghostly crowd of hearers, moved by passionate appeal and fervent zeal on the part of the Nativity preachers, as a field of grain ripe for the harvest ripples before the breeze, stirred at least by a surface emotion, Simone di Corso Donati, of handsome presence, as the historians affirm (*bello di persone*), head of the faction of the Neri, seated immovable on his horse, surrounded by his followers, listens to the Christmas words of peace uttered by the monk, as in the year 1301. How vivid the scene in this dreary place, with Dante watching on his pedestal! — the brilliant cavalier, pausing with curbed steed, secretly brooding on matters of political ven-

geance, the crowd admiring him, and the preacher waxing demonstrative in his hackneyed, monastic declamation of the day, the hour of the birth of Christ on earth. Lo! Niccolò de' Cerchi, of the Bianchi, uncle of Simone, and sworn foe, appeared at a remote angle, and crossed the *piazza*, intent on his own affairs, and in a moment all was changed. Hatred kindled in hearts; anger maddened brains; swords leaped from their scabbards; partisans surged from side to side, rallying about their chiefs, like the rising waves of a troubled sea, as storms, with swift lightning-strokes, have fallen on the campanile, and shattered it. The record of history is brief; the uncle was killed in the hasty conflict, and the vain youth died of the wounds received in the fray on the following day.

These reminiscences are only a gust of the mournful east wind wailing around the tower of Santa Croce. Gone is the shadowy brotherhood of Christmas preachers on the spot. The great chiefs of factions, Niccolò di Cerchi and Simone di Corso Donati, once full of pride, power, and strength, are a mere pinch of dust, and might form particles of the cloud now eddying about the feet of the marble Dante, their very feuds wellnigh forgotten by the world. The gray clouds visible on the horizon beyond Vallombrosa promise the wrath of approaching winter. Early snow has fallen on the Maritime Alps above Nice, and all the slopes of Apennine, the marshes of Udine, are frozen, and abundant ice chills Apulia and the extreme south of the peninsula. Now may the eight winds reputed to blow on Florence be promised full sway, causing the human harp to vibrate beneath the successive gusts. A servant opens a casement in the mansion covered with frescos, and shakes a silken table-cloth, leaving it to flutter in the air. The hanging of gorgeous tints, blended with all the skill of modern upholstery in imitation of mediæval colors and design, changes the aspect of the silent square. As long

as the strip of embroidered stuff hangs suspended from the window of the *palazzo*, the *piazza* becomes reanimated with a former splendor, is once more a volume of history unequalled for variety of pageantry, — now a concourse of citizens meeting to take measures for opposing Castruccio Castracane, lord of Lucca; now a sumptuous spectacle of the powers, given by the Duke of Athens; again joust and tournament of the Medici princes. Centuries form the chapters of such a volume, and the years are the pages. The wind lifts the corner of the drapery, with glint of gold thread in the woven tissue of plush, and arabesque border of animals at strife, amid garlands of olive-tinted leaves; and once more the spot is animated with the populace to witness the spectacle of the buffalo race, held in honor of Gonzaga of Mantua and Eleanora de' Medici in 1584. The court chronicle of the day announced the festival in these terms:—

“The following Sunday took place a beautiful and very rich buffalo race, comprising eight buffalo, each tricked out with different trappings.”

We are further advised that these animals issued forth from the stalls of his Highness in suitable order of procession, two and two, with their attendants. The docile beasts paced along our Via del Cocomero (Street of the Watermelon), followed the *contrada* which leads to Santa Maria Maggiore, slowly proceeding to San Pier Maggiore, past the Stinche (prisons) and thence to the Piazza Santa Croce, where an immense multitude of the populace, impatiently awaiting their arrival, had gathered for hours. Every window of these silent old mansions was crowded with animated faces; men clustered on the roofs, clinging to the very chimneys; the balconies, richly adorned, were filled with the dames who delighted to display their own charms on such occasions; while the seats in the square

below were filled, so that the number of spectators was estimated at fifty thousand.

Yonder empty balcony, with the rusty iron railing and the arid *piazza*, where the dust whirls around Dante on his pedestal, furnish a keynote of national character. At any time the balcony, like a similar projection of Venice, Verona, or Naples, may be freighted with beauty, sparkling with smiles, and decked with gems and lace to witness the transportation of Rossini's ashes from Paris to Santa Croce, or national anniversary. At any time the masses of peasantry from the adjacent country and Florentine citizens will gather in a sea of humanity to await the unveiling of a statue in the presence of royalty, as they once flocked to hear Savonarola's Lenten sermons, or to delight in the celebration of the Festa of Saint John.

The advent of the buffalo afforded a truly noble sight, although it might have inspired a grain of fear in the breast of the prudent to behold the heavily weighted benches and balconies and the house-tops, in dread of some calamity to mar the general gayety. The objects of such general interest entered the enclosure by a door in the palisade. Were they own brothers of the buffalo still to be seen on the Campagna, and in the Pontine Marshes? Were they of the flock that yielded the milk requisite to make the small cheese served daily to Pope Pius II., of epicurean taste? Three or four times did the shaggy beasts trot around the arena, with a "marvellous and beautiful effect." Attendant masqueraders amused the ladies and gentlemen in the windows by tossing artificial eggs, filled with perfumed waters, then led the way in the direction of the bridge of the Rubaconte (Ponte alle Grazie) as a signal that the race was about to begin. The trumpets sounded for the starting; and the buffalo, goaded by blows, and all the ingenuity of torment inherent in

Southern races, departed for the goal, the Palio decked with red damask, where fires were kindled to additionally excite the animals. The buffalo of the Grand-duke won.

The contest of speed of the buffaloes over, the revellers returned to the sport of throwing the eggs of perfumed water. Then a company of gay cavaliers broke lances until the close of night. Later the maskers sought the house of Pier Antonio de' Bardi, at the Canto agli Alberti, whence issued a car crowded with men and boys singing a madrigal, composed by Giovanni Battista Strozzi, and set to music by the host. The car went about the town, followed by many people, and escorted by torch-bearers, the flames displaying the gorgeous costumes of the singers, whose spirits did not flag until four o'clock in the morning.

Surely the wail of the wind and the tinkling vibration of the bells bring some faint echo of the madrigal lingering in the streets of the old city, even at this hour, — a strain caught up by the smith, bending to his task in a dark byway, hummed by the brisk apprentice of the mosaic-worker, and trolled forth in full, sweet cadence by the operatives of the San Frediano quarter on warm nights, to the accompaniment of guitar and fairy mandolin. Now the strip of silk fluttering in the casement is caught by conflicting currents, wrenched from the fastenings, and blown far out into the square. All the winds appear to contend for the trophy in rough sport. Tramontana lifts the bullion fringe, while Libeccio tugs at the opposite corner; Scirocco sends the drapery up into the air billowing out like a balloon, tawny-orange, puce-colored, violet, emerald, and steely-blue, while Greco and Levante successively bring it in undulating ripples of folds down to the ground, where it lies in a variegated heap, conquered by Mistrale, Ponente, and Mezzogiorno.

Yes, the winds hold full sway on the spot, now making their own riot of play, race, and tournament. Did Florentine wit jest concerning the gusts sweeping about the Campanile of Santa Croce, in which his Satanic Majesty played a part? Had Arlotto, the merry priest, no quirk for this locality, — he who promised the populace to make it rain, if any two people could agree as to the time? The legend still lingers, in gusty March weather, of how the Wind and the Devil kept a rendezvous in the Piazza of the Duomo once upon a time, and the latter gave the former the slip by entering the church, wherefore Boreas yet awaits outside the return of the nimble adversary of mankind. The prudent pedestrian may still avail himself of certain thoroughfares laid out in winding curves to avoid the sharp cold of winter winds; but in the open spaces the elements hold their own. Listen to the stroke of Santa Croce's bells! In the year 1608 Cosimo de' Medici, son of Ferdinand I., sat over yonder, beside his bride Maria Maddalena, daughter of Duke Charles of Austria, to witness the spectacle in this fitting place, of the Masquerade of the Winds.

Does the world change in marked degree with the lapse of years? How much indebted to those earlier spectacles of the old Florentine Piazza of Santa Croce are modern, municipal pageants? — the carnival rout of the Riviera towns, flowery chariots of the seasons, with their emblems of snow, ice, and autumn; Viennese historical cavalcades, or Lord Mayor's show of the colonies grouped together, — New Zealand with her goats' fleeces, Australia, decked with golden grain and grapes, Malta, in black draperies, emblazoned with her cross, India, enveloped in jewelled tissues, the Cape Colony, wreathed with ostrich plumes, and carrying the Cape lily. The bell sends forth a quivering note, and our bit of drapery lying on the ground expands, clothes the whole space with fluttering

banners, tapestries, damask, and brocade depending from balcony and embrasure.

The populace surged toward this centre; as usual, the scaffoldings built for spectators were filled with humanity; the windows and balconies were occupied by eager and smiling participants of the revelry. Such fanciful designs as a small palace built of shells, and a painted mountain of rock, occupied remote angles of the square.

Don Antonio de' Medici, as master of ceremonies, gave the signal for the festivities to commence. Eolus, as King of the Winds, appeared in the east. He wore a crown and a purple mantle, and rode a large horse. He was preceded by twelve valets in the garb of sailors, as the first scholars in the craft of navigation by means of sails, twelve Tritons of fantastic humor, and eight sirens, four of whom, dressed in black, scattered the destructive elements of hail, tempest, and ice around them. Then came King Eolus surrounded by mounted cavaliers and courtiers. Behind him appeared the car of Ocean, drawn by two whales, and decked with corals and shells. The escort of Neptune were the charming nymphs of the sea, rivers, and springs. Deiopeia, queen of Eolus, followed in state. Perpetual variety was afforded to the *fête* by the king's approaching the painted mountain or the palace of shells, and touching them with his sceptre, when fresh groups would issue forth to increase the diversions of the sunny hours, headed by blithe Zephyr, playing on the violin. And thus with feasting, laughter, and the breaking of lances, night ensued. Sprightly Zephyr may still haunt the spot with the thin, piercing melody of his instrument. A servant hastens out of the door of the old *palazzo* with the frescos, and gathers up the bit of silk drapery swept away by the wind. The keynote of suggestive color is quenched by the closing of a massive portal. The bells hang mute in the church tower. King

Eolus has again retreated eastward beyond the horizon of sombre, gray clouds over Vallombrosa. Dante reigns alone in the deserted square, musing:—

“Naught but a gust of wind is worldly fame,
Now from this quarter, now from that arriving,
And bearing with each change a different name.”

III. A JEWEL-BOX.

On the 10th of August Florence celebrates the Festa of San Lorenzo, and according to custom the weather should be excessively hot. “As hot as the day of San Lorenzo,” is a saying generally accepted, the sun’s rays possibly suggesting the glowing coals and gridiron of the noble youth’s martyrdom. Seasons may vary south of the Alps, and in Tuscany one summer is no guide for another. Why should the breeze be cool, with a hint of hail recently fallen on the heights, in its breath that enters the Florence Window, rendering agreeable at any hour of the day a ramble across the Via dei Pucci to the Via Cavour, in response to the invitation of San Lorenzo’s bells?

The Riccardi Palace is magnificent in stately proportions of massive stone, barred casement, and great iron rings to hold the torches and standards of the Middle Ages, in the light of the summer morning. Venders of small wares, brooms, lamps, bird-cages, occupy the stone bench flanking the spacious structure. There is an unwonted crowd, moving of vehicles, and perceptible hum of voices in all of the streets leading to the Piazza of San Lorenzo; and still the bell clangs out above other sounds.

We are reminded that it is the festival of the shops selling *pasta*; and each is made as attractive in decoration of green garlands, tinsel ornaments, and little flags as the skill and pecuniary resources of the shop-keeper can render them. In the midst the *pasta* is temptingly dis-

played, the hard red grain of wheat crushed, prepared, and manipulated into manifold shapes by generations of workers at Naples, Genoa, or Bologna. Here the long and apparently brittle pipes of macaroni are built into gigantic pyramids of interlacing sticks in a window, flanked by the short, tough stems known as *padre nostre*; there the more delicate white *nastrini* ("ribbons"), *vermicelli*, and *capellini*, — the latter as finely spun as hairs, — are arranged in nests and festoons on a shelf, while heaps of tiny golden grains, *occhi* ("eyes"), and transparent crescents or stars for soup are piled in bags around the entire interior. The Italian *gourmet* will not fail to note the *capelli* ("hats"), the small disks of paste to be filled with minced fowl or veal, like liliputian patties gently stewed in broth, and served with some subtile flavor of nutmeg, in one of the *Case gastronomiche* of the Via Porta Rossa, which are ever redolent of ham and sausage. Great wheels of golden Milan butter, the flask of oil, and the odorous Parmesan cheese at hand must additionally tempt a people of a largely farinaceous diet like the Florentines, in such a display. In the Borgo San Lorenzo rises a temple of *pasta* of fair and accurate architectural proportions, the proprietor of the shop beaming in an obscure perspective of triumphal arches, between columns of twisted *vermicelli*, and with a cupola roof of solid paste overhead.

Why is macaroni dedicated to Saint Lawrence by ancient Florence? Is a larger quantity of the nutritious article of food consumed by the town on this day than on any other in the calendar of the year? Was the first Italian who strung the threads in festoons to dry in the air christened Lorenzo? Nobody pauses to answer, and the bells clang on, chanting their own refrain of higher thoughts than mere aliment for the perishing body of man. The young Medici soldier, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in mar-

ble, adorns the corner of the narrow *piazza*. The portals of the church are hung with rich draperies of red damask in honor of the *feſta*. The throng preſſes into the ſanctuary in waves of humanity; a glimmer of ſtars of tapers on diſtant altars is viſible above the heads of the people; the voices of prieſts and acolytes are audible from time to time; and heavy clouds of incenſe float on the air.

An unlovely ſpot the Piazza San Lorenzo, even on the day of the *feſta*: the lofty houſes flanking the contracted ſpace on either ſide are dingy, weather-beaten, and faded; the margin of cellar ſhops of ready-made clothing, umbrellas, and old furniture are ſordid and mean. Even the church is not impreſſive from this point of view, with the rough, unfinished façade. Founded in 390, and conſecrated by Saint Ambroſe in 393, it is one of the moſt ancient churches in Italy. Destroyed by fire in 1423, it was rebuilt by the Medici in the late Romanesque ſtyle, from deſigns of Brunelleſco, and completed by Michelangelo, in the beautiful Laurentian library, the new ſacriſty, and even with the deſign of adorning the ſtill nude façade. Like thoſe unadorned exteriors of the manſions of opulent merchants in Eaſtern cities, with teſſellated courts and gardens, and ſumptuous chambers within, never was more humble gateway to the treaſures of art here collected than the door of the Church of San Lorenzo on the ſquare.

Place aux dames!

The liſtener may diſcern the note of two women's lives in the cadence of the bells ringing in the lofty campanile. Far back in the dim paſt of the fourth century a pious matron vowed to build here the primitive church, like Hannah of Biblical fame, if Heaven would grant her a ſon, to be chriſtened Lorenzo. The wiſh fulfilled, the ſanctuary was bleſſed by Saint Ambroſe. The Electreſs-Palatine Anna Maria Louiſa de' Medici, ſiſter of the laſt Grand-duke of the line, Gian Gaſtone, built the campa-

nile, as completing triumphantly the work destined to preserve the fame and magnificence of her race.

Follow the street along the side of the *piazza*, past the shops of battered and greasy furniture, to the base of the tower. In the rear alone, the vastness and grandeur of proportion of clustering dome, spire, roofs, and cornices of the entire structure become visible. At an angle of the wall the campanile rises, dark, lofty, and symmetrical, — the belfry built by a woman. The fabric is not incrustated with precious marbles, having the rosy reflections of certain sea-shells, nor guarded by the statues of saints and prophets in myriad niches, nor fretted with airy casement, like Giotto's Tower, but has rather the plain aspect of having been constructed to hold bells in fitting equilibrium, and resist storms. Erected by a Medici princess, the Campanile of San Lorenzo should have been wrought of Florentine mosaic. If the memory of the pious matron of the fourth century lingers about the entrance of the temple on the *piazza*, the campanile is more emblematic of worldly ambition and the pride of life than of religious rite. The pious matron hovers, a pale shade, on the threshold of the church. The electress-palatine is a gorgeous personage just emerged from the frame of one of those portraits of the Palatinate, whether in the museum of Heidelberg Castle, or in the corridors of the Uffizi galleries, — a full-blown flower of redundant feminine charms, bearing a certain resemblance to other noble dames of the period in the matter of laced bodices, velvet and ermine mantles, brocaded robes, arms bare to the elbow ruffle, powdered hair, rounded chins, and full red lips.

The foundations of the tower were laid in June, 1740, and the first block blessed by the Prior Francesco Mancini, assisted by a body of the canons and the clergy. This block consisted of a marble coffer containing many relics

of saints, medals of Saint Anna, and a medallion of the electress-palatine, surrounded by the words, "Deo et omnia." Completed on the 24th of July of the following year, the five bells were hung on high, and rang for the first time on the Festa of Saint Anna, in honor of the noble donor, namesake of the saint.

Doubtless all the Annas in Florence, young and old, rejoiced on the occasion, as the Maries of France beam over their bouquets of the Assumption. The Festa of Saint Anna acquired a deep significance in the capital of the Valdarno, in 1343, as the anniversary of the banishment from her walls of the odious tyrant, the Duke of Athens, and celebrated as such in the Church of Or San Michele, when the *gonfaloniere* of the arts or guilds met around the statues in the niches dedicated to their respective crafts.

The bells of the ancient Campanile of San Lorenzo, cast in 1215, had been four in number, and the bronze of these was melted, with much additional metal, to fuse the new ones. The work was done by Signore Moreni, in the lower fortress, commended as an excellent foundryman. The first bell was christened Saint John Baptist, the second Saint Joseph, the third Saint Lawrence, the fourth Saint Ambrose and Saint Zenobius, the fifth Cosimo and Damien.

"For the glory of my race!" The proud electress-palatine seems to speak thus through the blended voices of the bells. Her draperies of velvet and brocade rustle, the strings of pearls looped through her powdered tresses gleam, and she points with the sceptre held in her taper fingers to the low doorway in the rear: "Enter!"

The metallic vibration of the bells is imperious and commanding. You do not attempt to rebel at the Medici fiat, and obey, passing the old custodian who is seated at a desk in the vestibule to sell tickets of admission, as if the

sacristy were a theatre, and speedily finding yourself in the Chapel of the Princes. "A barren and unimpressive edifice is it, this Basilica of San Lorenzo? Look about at your ease, and ask pardon of the august dead for such an error." The voice of the electress, sonorous and majestic, speaks ever through the medium of the bells in the adjacent campanile. The chapel is silent and cold, even on this summer day. The noisy crowd circulating in the church, *piazza*, and about the shops seems far away; the bells drop from their high clamor to sudden stillness of calm.

Foreign tourists do not abound in August; and a dejected *cicerone* wearies finally of imparting to inattentive ears a more than twice-told tale of the wealth of these tombs, the unearthing of stern Cosimo I., with his auburn beard unharmed, and sad Eleanora of Toledo, still recognizable by her long yellow hair fastened with gold cords, and departs. You are alone in one of the most magnificent mausoleums in the world. The Medici have stretched forth the iron hand clad in the silken glove, and claimed you, modest stranger of the nineteenth century. A wonderful family, keen, prudent, wicked, and liberal, expanding from the vigorous root of the sagacious old citizen Cosimo, Pater Patriæ, flowering in full splendor of power with Lorenzo the Magnificent, and the Grand-duke Cosimo I., and fading, with a few fresh offshoots, to deserved extinction with the foolish and vicious youth who resembled only too much the spoiled children of the rich man's nursery.

One of the most interesting figures of these last branches of the family tree was the Grand-duke Ferdinand I.; and to him posterity owes this jewel-box of a chapel. Fourth son of Duke Cosimo I., and educated as a cardinal, he succeeded his brother Francesco I., bringing with him the artistic culture of the Roman court. Ferdinand rides his

bronze charger in the Piazza Annunziata, modelled by Giovanni da Bologna, as King Victor Emanuele curbs his steed in the Piazza of the Old Market still surrounded by the picturesque towers, huddling roofs, and *loggie*, destined to be swept away by new Italy, giving place to Paris shop and glass-covered *galleria*, like Milan. The background of association of Duke Ferdinand is more harmonious in the Flower City, and mellow sunshine falls on the columns of the Church of the Annunziata, lingers on the medallions of Luca della Robbia above the great Hospital of the Innocents on the left hand of the statue, and deepens the shade about the massive entrance of the bishop's palace on the right hand. "For the glory of my race!" proclaims Duke Ferdinand, extending his sceptre over the city. He further embellished Florence by bringing the Venus de' Medici, the family of Niobe, the wrestlers, and the knife-grinder from the Villa Medici at Rome. Nor did his ambition cease with these acquisitions. He made a law that on all mountains, shores, and valleys of Tuscany any person of whatever condition who appropriated transparent amethyst, jasper, or chalcedony should be compelled to pay a fine of fifty *scudi*, and serve at the galleys for a term of ten years. These prohibitions defined with especial severity the Podesteria of Barga, the Vicariats of Scarperia, Firenzuola, and Palazzuola, with the Commissariato of Volterra.

What pictures the princely sentence brings before the mind! The little city of Barga, built in the Middle Ages up among the enfolding hills of the Garfagnana region, defying all invading armies with her gates closed, whose sons go forth to sell plaster images to distant lands, grind organs, and engage in other crafts to gather the frugal competence that will enable them to return to their own vineyards, olives, and chestnut woods in old age, recurs to memory with a party of English tourists from the Baths

of Lucca, climbing the path in summer weather, mounted on donkeys.

Scarperia, in the Mugello, on the slopes of the Apennines, has still the industry of making the native cutlery which has flourished here since the fourteenth century. The pocket-knife wielded in Sardinia, the Maremma, and Modena, as well as in Florence, is far too cheap, convenient, and durable for the quarrels of a hot-blooded race. The lady glancing over the terrace wall of her villa in the suburbs, and gathering her little brood of children more closely about her, refrains from reproving the band of audacious boys from the slums of the town stealing figs on the slopes below.

Mere urchins that they are, she fears they already carry knives. Ah, Scarperia of ugly fame, why does your cutlery not cost more dearly, and a saving of human life result!

In connection with the fiat of the Grand-duke Ferdinand, the image of the typical old lady traveller of this generation, whether English, Scotch, Irish, or American, again haunts the scenes of her unscrupulous depredations. On the Capitoline and Aventine hills alike, and in bath or catacomb, she steals the bits of gleaming stones in the mosaic pavements of the Cæsars, under the very nose of the most vigilant guards. Polished by Roman lapidaries, these trophies furnish the paper-weights and even tables which form her souvenirs of travel. Conscientious in other matters of the Christian code, the old lady invariably revels in the excitement incident to her nefarious proceedings, and stows away morsels of alabaster of historical value in her pocket, slips cubes of *verde-antico* up her sleeve, and has been known to hug a fragment of red jasper under her left arm, concealed by the folds of a shawl. "I collected them all myself," she chuckles, gazing complacently at her shining hoard, and betraying no

more remorse on her benevolent and ingenuous countenance than the female smuggler is supposed to experience on similar occasions. Even the penalty imposed by the Medici prince of serving ten years at the galleys, and the risk of paying the fifty *scudi* fine in addition, would scarcely deter the old lady from doing a little pilfering at Pompeii, or in the Forum.

As a familiar result of the law one sees, behind the protecting crystal of the museum case, the statuette of James the Disciple, with hands and feet of Volterra jasper and flowing garments of the white jasper of Caselli, and the red and green of Sicily; or Matthew, with his right hand raised while his left holds an open gilt book, the face and extremities wrought of the white marble of Porto Santo, his vestments of amethyst and lapis-lazuli; or Saint Peter, carrying tiny keys, his mantle made of the yellow jasper of Sicily, his tunic of amethyst, and his head and hands of Volterra chalcedony.

The Medici appreciated the beauty of the intarsia designs of Greece and Rome, and the grandeur of the Siennese school from Duccio and Matteo di Giovanni da Siena to Beccafumi as the inventors of *tarsia a chiaroscuro*, the use of marbles to give shade, relief, and concavity. The art of working in *pietra-dura* was Lombard, the Badia of Pavia being an ornate example; and the Duke Francesco I. had already engaged the services of Giovanni Bianchi of Milan. Ferdinand I. added Matteo Nigetti, Andrea Mariotti, Daniello Flosch, and many others. Pictures and sacred history wrought in gems resulted, the miniature productions of the jeweller, curious rather than attractive, and remote, indeed, in the scale of art from Beccafumi's pavement of the Siena Cathedral. The mosaic works established in the Casino of San Marco were removed in 1588 to the Uffizi, and thence, on the suppression of the convent of San Niccolò, to the Street of the

Watermelon (Via del Cocomero), where the craft was followed for a time.

The bells have ceased to ring, and you are alone in the Chapel of the Princes. The chronicle of Settimanni is a more agreeable companion than the dejected *cicerone*, whose very voice has a threadbare sound.

“On the 6th of August, 1604, the Serenissimo Grand-duke Ferdinand I. chose a spot near the Church of San Lorenzo whereon to build a sumptuous chapel, and came with all his court on Friday, day of the holy passion of our Seigneur, to the place, to witness the ceremony of giving to the Signor Prince Don Cosimo, his eldest son, a gold spade, with which the latter dug some earth of the foundations, and loaded a gilded basket with his own hand.”

The foundations laid, the ceremonies terminated, and the labor of building commenced, the Grand-duke said, *Qui sarā il nostro fine*, — “Here will be our end.” In January he gave further orders for a rich chapel to be built behind the choir of the church, which was designed by Giovanni de’ Medici, who understood architecture, and executed by Matteo Nigetti, sculptor. Note the jasper of Barga and Sicily, with granite of Elba and Corsica wrought into pavement, and the incrustation of those seven imposing sepulchres of the dead Medici. Cosimo II. has, in addition, a cushion set with precious stones, — rubies and topaz, in Oriental chalcedony and jasper of Cyprus. Note the thread of history connecting each around the walls, in the arms of the towns subject to their rule, escutcheons of Chiusi, Siena, Montepulciano, or Borgo San Sepolcro, inlaid with lapis-lazuli, agate, mother-of-pearl, *giallo-antico*, and *verde-antico*.

Duke Ferdinand levied tribute on the shores and mountains of Tuscany to decorate his tomb; yet these did not suffice, and if the flint pebbles of the Arno bed were util-

ized in the tints requisite for laurel, olive, and myrtle branches, he sought farther afield, as did King Solomon when he built the Temple, for the red agate of Goa, the green jasper of Candia, Egyptian granite, transparent alabaster, carnelian, and chalcedony of the East. Admiration of the splendor of his design touches us even now in the stillness of the Chapel of the Princes so long after he has found here a fitting resting-place. "Here will be our end!" Surely the lustre and blended hues of precious marbles are more beautiful touched by the sunshine and caressed by the winds of Italy than in other lands, unless beneath the blue sky of Greece.

Duke Ferdinand sought to preserve the name of his family in such imperishable form as *pietra-dura*. He died, leaving the task uncompleted, and the electress-palatine, in her time, as last member of the house, finished the chapel. She ordered Jadot, director of the royal works, in 1740, to gather together all the materials requisite, and have the cupola painted.

The bells once more sway in the campanile. "A mean and unimpressive sanctuary is San Lorenzo," they seem to insist, with shrill clamor. Have you forgotten that the old parish church was the Cathedral of Florence at one time, and rebuilt by the liberality of Giovanni de' Medici? On this so-called squalid *piazza*, crowded with ignoble shops of clothing and old furniture, magnificent ceremonies took place when Pope Clement VII. sent to the shrine of his family the gift of fifty vases, containing relics of saints for the altar of San Lorenzo before which sleeps Cosimo, Pater Patriæ. In November of the year 1532 the canon of San Lorenzo was ordered to receive the munificent donation, which had been first deposited at the monastery of Annalena. Accordingly, on the 14th of the month the fifty vases, made of sardonyx, agate, crystal, carnelian, and amethyst, with silver handles and lids,

were borne on a platform covered with gold cloth from the monastery to the church by a procession of the clergy, magistrates, and people, and deposited in the sacred edifice.

The day of Saint Lawrence wears on to evening, through all the gorgeous transitions of light and color of the summer sunset. A cool twilight ensues such as Dante strolled forth in to enjoy the evening hour in the Piazza of the Duomo. The town acquires the dignity and austerity of aspect of bygone centuries in the softly gathering shadows. One would not be astonished if the thin, keen face of Savonarola gazed forth from the cowl of yonder monk, only the brown robe and knotted cord proclaim the latter a Franciscan. How could true followers of "sweet Saint Francis of Assisi" have ever been notable for persecuting a Savonarola? To meet Michelangelo glancing at Ghiberti's bronze doors, fit gateway of Paradise, or Ghiberti looking at Brunelleschi's dome with futile jealousy, would occasion no surprise in the haunts sacred to the memory of these great men.

Piero di Neri Acciagnoli paces yonder with measured tread, wearing his tunic of gold brocade of Alexandria sweeping in stiff folds to the ground, fastened with silver buttons, and his mantle of crimson damask and hood. Piero di Pazzi turns toward the Borgo degli Albizi at this hour, — the noble gentleman who possessed such a retentive memory that he could repeat aloud the *Æneid* of Virgil, or the orations of Livy, as the late blind Duke of Sermoneta declaimed whole cantos of the "Divina Commedia."

In the Street of the Watermelon, who so wiry and gay as the antiquarian? His cat shares his mood. The antiquarian has banished his winter coat bordered with fur in favor of a silky lightness of texture. He holds a small mosaic box in his fingers, and is polishing the sur-



face with a bit of leather. The box is finished in ebony and adorned with a sprig of lily-of-the-valley on the panels. You have never seen mere commonplace modern mosaic in the shop of the antiquarian, and pause to inspect the object. The coincidence of the trifling specimen of an art elaborated in the Chapel of the Princes being thus thrust upon your notice, as it were, induces immediate purchase at a very reasonable price. You carry it home with a sentiment of interest never before experienced in mosaic. The antiquarian rubs his thin, wrinkled hands together with a professional gesture, pausing on the threshold of his shop. The cat cuts a caper, giving a feline bound full of grace in the air, then subsides to a quiescent rubbing of arched back and sides against the patron's leg. The words of the shop-keeper follow the purchaser, "This is a jewel-box, and very old."

Musing on San Lorenzo and the Chapel of the Princes, you place the box on the inevitable table, mounted in gilt and adorned with the familiar magnolia blossom of petrified Oriental wood in the centre. You never anticipated being tempted to purchase more Florentine mosaic. San Lorenzo is responsible for the folly. No; it is not a jewel-box, but a reliquary, with a bit of shrivelled parchment bound with tinsel thread, concealed beneath a slide in the bottom, and thus resembles those precious vases sent by Pope Clement VII. to the altar of the parish church of the Medici. From the design on the lid spring all the cabinets and tables strewn with birds, flower garlands, musical instruments, and bands of tripping muses, that have gone forth into the world.

The bells of San Lorenzo resound through all the adjacent streets, claiming a haughty precedence of other notes. There is no holy and sweet cadence in their metallic utterance. The shade of the pious matron of the fourth century, kneeling at the portal of the sanctuary, may

murmur low in the summer twilight, "Lord, keep my memory green." The electress-palatine, gathering the volume of sound of all the bells of the lofty campanile, still proclaims, "For the glory of my race."

IV. A POT OF GERANIUM.

"Come with me to look at one of God's ladders to heaven." Such is the invitation of the artist on the November morning, pausing before the Florence Window, sketchbook and color-box in hand.

The artist is of American birth, and Florentine by adoption. A sympathetic and robust personality, she shuns rather than courts public recognition, and dreams life away in her studio of the wide Viale with the keen, northern light, or haunts gallery, garden wall, frescoed cloister, some nook of palace court and stairway, as the seasons pass the ebbing grains of the hour-glass. For her, and such as she, the Flower City still spreads her richest banquet of artistic enjoyment. "I like to walk through the Street of the Watermelon," she muses. "I am here a humble follower of a phantom host of the great ones, those earlier brothers, the artists. I should like to shake hands with Donatello on this very spot, and exchange the time of day with old Cimabue, in his peaked hood. Stay! I am the ghost, and they are the reality. They are still here, while I, the feeble shadow, am not. Do you ever think of that when you look out of the casement on the Shrine of the Five Lamps at midnight?"

"Yes," we reply.

The artist lapses into more profound reverie as her gaze strays half wistfully in the direction of the Duomo. Sudden discontent clouds her strongly marked, sun-bronzed features. "Courage! In a future state you will surely know, and be one of them," we hasten to add.

"Where is situated your celestial ladder of this morning, O dreamer of dreams?"

She smiles and makes a slight grimace of relenting humor. "A church tower," she explains in a brusque tone. "I am making a study of all the Florentine campanile."

"The guidebooks state that there are eighty-six or seven churches," we interpose warningly.

"When I have completed my series of water-color drawings some critic will prefer the gentle art of amateur photography," the artist pursues. "Come along."

"Possibly more speedy recognition of talent might have fallen to the share of most of us had we lived at an earlier day," we suggest, as we emerge into the street. "This is such a gifted as well as crowded age, you know."

"An age of art needle-work! Who buys all the embroidered cushions and perfumed sachets in the world? How can the supply possibly be exhausted? Ah, the needle and the distaff are still sad enemies of the brush and the pencil, as Caterina Ginnasi said."

The idea of having been born out of time, and destined to thrive better in another generation, tickles the fancy of the artist, and affords food for whimsical speculation all along the Via Cerretani, the Via Rondinelli, and the Via Tornabuoni, to the Trinità Bridge, where she pauses abruptly to rifle the basket of the brown little flower-woman of marigolds, copper-hued, with golden disks. "What would existence be worth without daffodils, primroses, and marigolds?" she exclaims, selecting a bunch of richest tints. "Better a crust of native bread, unsalted, in the Flower City than gloomy skies, mud, and rain elsewhere!"

A marked trait of character of this plain, rather masculine woman, with the short, curling hair, is that she is seldom devoid of a fresh flower attached to the breast of

faded ulster, shabby jacket, or summer gown. She leads the way across the bridge, along the Via Santo Spirito to the narrow Via Maffei, where she pauses before a small house and rings the bell of the most diminutive of doors. "The church tower is that of Santo Spirito. Did you imagine I was about to plant a camp-stool in the middle of the square to sketch it?"

In response to the cautious inquiry of the mistress of the house, *Chi è?* ("Who is it?") and satisfactory explanation, we ascend an external flight of stone steps, much worn and broken, to a tiny apartment. The hostess, a little woman with a sallow visage and a pair of eager, restless black eyes, receives us with innate grace of manner. The interior is of a dainty cleanliness: the red tiles of the floor have been freshly polished with oil, vinegar, and sawdust; and a crisp muslin curtain drapes the window. An ivory crucifix, mounted on an ebony cross of finely executed workmanship, and having the milky whiteness of a freshly peeled almond, hangs on the wall. On a table and faded sofa lie billows of antique lace, frostwork pattern and creamy fold defined by a dark cloth.

The little woman is a *trinaja* (lace-vender), and a glance at her deft yellow fingers suggests how skilfully this human spider mends broken meshes, belonging to the wardrobe of great ladies, tinges the Venetian point a deeper tint, or spreads her own modest store to tempt purchasers, with a wheedling insistence of manner. "A *fichu* of true *point d'aiguille*? A priest's cope? No? This flounce of Renaissance lace, period of Raffaello of Urbino, then?" the *trinaja* coaxes, a sudden brilliant smile on her thin face, revealing white teeth.

"No, Elena! I wish to admire your pot of geranium this morning, and make a drawing of the Campanile of Santo Spirito from the kitchen window."

“Willingly, Signora.”

The hostess thrusts aside the filmy and heavy laces, and leads the way to a miniature kitchen which makes a picture in itself. The room is narrow and small, the projecting chimney occupying one side over the primitive Florentine hearth, where a coal glows in a tiny aperture. Several culinary utensils of copper glisten on hooks on the wall, while an adjacent table holds a loaf of bread, a bundle of fresh salad, and several carrots and onions. On the opposite side a tiny window, with a pot of geranium on the ledge, frames the church tower, rising slender and dark against the sky. The humble casement overlooks a spacious garden where roses, myrtle, and heliotrope bloom in sunny nooks, sheltered by high walls and houses.

“The geranium has more blossoms,” Elena announces, touching the pale pink stars with a tender pride of proprietorship.

A tiny transparent snail-shell is attached to a green leaf, like a fairy mansion of pearl. When Elena addresses the snail with injuries and reproaches, as a glutton intent on devouring her one poor plant, and is about to snap the parasite off into the garden below with finger and thumb, the artist restrains her from the act of violence.

“Leave the poor snail in peace, Elena, for the foreground of my sketch. He only asks a little salad, a morsel of leaf of you. How would you like to be deprived of your bunch of *endivia* yonder? Remember the snail is also Italian.”

“Ah! What a good soul!” the *trinaja* retorts gayly, and nibbles a bit of the endive, as if to prove the truth of the artist’s assertion.

The latter removes her hat, thrusts back her short curling hair, and opens her sketchbook on her knee.

Elena clasps her hands on her breast with a dramatic gesture. “If I were a lady, I would have rich flowers and

rare plants all about me everywhere! I would prefer them to many jewels."

"So would I," assents the artist.

The little woman nods, flits away, and presently returns, carrying Giotto's Campanile, carved in ivory. The husband is a worker in ivory, with considerable artistic ability, and times are dull for trade. He has wrought for years on this hand's breadth of tower, in leisure moments and on holidays, hoping to send it to some world's exhibition. Elena holds up the toy to the sunshine, and a soft, rosy glow permeates the airy structure. She scrutinizes it with an expression of scorn and mockery. "Now that the thing is finished, there is no place for it at Paris or London," she mutters. "Leonardo asks five hundred francs. Bah! He will be lucky if he ever gets two hundred francs."

"Some rich prince travelling through Italy may buy the tower," suggests the artist, encouragingly. "You brought it out just to show how much more beautiful is the work of Leonardo than anything I may hope to achieve in a study of the Campanile of Santo Spirito."

Elena laughs and tosses her head slightly, as she places the treasure on the table. Mistress of all subtleties of human expression, as concealing thought, the shrewd, sharp thrust of her visitor has nearly surprised her into a confession of doubt if the labors of any stranger can ever equal native talent.

She is a curious and a characteristic type, this *trinaja*, with all the duplicity and nimble address of the lady's-maid, as an endowment of nature, combined with a certain amount of refined enjoyment of the beautiful and the artistic. Her birthplace was the Romagna, and her mistress, a noble lady of Ravenna, had reared this hand-maiden in her town palace and on her country estates, where the fashions of the eighteenth century still lingered,

and the peasant women spun the heavy linen that furnished a portion of the dowry of the daughters of the house. Imbued with that spirit of discontent of the alien forced to abide in one province of the kingdom when a native of another, which is still noticeable in Italians, Elena was well married to the young Florentine worker in ivory, and no doubt given a portion. Why was a Tuscan husband chosen for her instead of a man of her own country? Was she a dangerous tool, removed with all possible discretion of suitable settlement in life from that patriarchal mansion at Ravenna, where the mistress inspected the stores of linen, and the master loitered at the club all day? Hungering for a splendor of luxury altogether above her station, prone to moods of sarcasm and excitement followed by a reaction of despondency, visionary, bitterly envious of prosperity or happiness in others, she delights in the trade of lace-vender, taken up at a time of need, when the irksome routine of service would irritate her restless spirit. The very chances of the day of selling nothing at all, or of reaping a harvest of ready sales, exhilarates her. Life, as a lottery of hazard, blank disappointment, and brilliant success charms her imagination. There is something feline about her; and this miniature interior, so dainty, clean, and attractive, must be an uncomfortable abode for the little husband and the little son, subject to sharp recrimination and sudden storm-gusts of feminine temper.

"I have one boy," she states, in response to inquiries concerning her family. "Dante must enter the army or the service of the telegraph, with suitable influence. If I had a girl, I would shut her up in a convent until the day of her marriage. Eh! the Florence streets are a bad school for any girl."

The sound of priests chanting becomes audible in the kitchen.

"Yes; it is the funeral *cortège* of the major of artillery to the railway station. Poor man! Two days ago he was in good health, and now he is dead. *Mal di petto* (congestion of the lungs), you understand, and then the miliari fever set in, and all hope was over. It is always like that, from our late King Victor Emanuele to his son, the Duke of Aosta. Even the blood-letting of our bravest doctors does not save them."

Elena makes this explanation, with her head held on one side in a meditative attitude. The chanting swells louder, passes the house, and dies away in the distance, merging into the funeral dirge of military music.

"What a farce it all is, the singing, the candles, and the incense!" the lace-woman adds, her thin lips curling into a satirical smile.

You observe her with surprise. She is a sceptic, then, dwelling here in the shadow of the old church?

The artist mixes colors on a tiny porcelain palette. "The Frate of Santo Spirito are the landlords of Elena," she suggests slyly.

The thin, dark little face of the hostess changes swiftly. "I wish the Frate would mend the tiles," she remarks, with recurring laughter and turn of mood to good-humor, as capricious as her frowns.

Here the cat of the household vaults on the window-ledge from some convenient projection of adjacent wall, peers in the narrow casement with round yellow eyes, as if reconnoitring the premises, whisks deftly around the pot of geranium without disturbing a leaf, and bounds into the arms of the mistress. The animal, large, plump, and gray in hue, understands life in its own fashion, asking only shelter and human companionship of the lace-woman, prowling over the roofs as a pastime, and foraging for small game with remarkable success, to judge by the sleek proportions of its body. A descent to *terra firma*

would possess no attractions to Pussy save for one powerful allurement, — to sit on the wall and taunt to the verge of distraction the dogs of the adjacent garden is a diversion that never fails to enliven the cat, varied by stealthy descents to the grass of the enemy's territory. A frantic dash, growl, and scramble across the garden ensues, the brood of puppies whimpering with excitement in the rear, and too young to join in the sport; and the gray cat is once more perched on the wall, with a mien of cool impertinence and abstraction, as who should say, "Can you possibly be barking at me?"

"Sometime the fierce dogs will catch thee," Elena admonishes, caressing the pet.

The cat replies, with a conceited manner, and as plainly as a cat can, while briskly purring thanks for any interest in the matter, "Is that your opinion?"

Sunshine penetrates the narrow kitchen window. The scent of flowers floats up from the old garden, and mingles with the fragrance of the sturdy geranium plant on the ledge. The ivory campanile on the table glows golden yellow in the light, while beyond, the salad-leaves acquire an emerald green tint.

The aromatic and pungent odors of the geranium carry imagination far from the spot to the margin of the Mediterranean Sea, where the limpid waves lapse about inlet and promontory of tawny red rocks, and the vigorous geranium clings to every terrace of garden wall in luxuriant growth. On the Riviera alone does this humble friend of the poor, adorning windows in pots, acquire a right to belong to such exalted company as the palm, the olive, citron, and myrtle. A bell sends forth a prolonged and liquid note, and in thought, even while gazing at the shaft of tower from the casement, we quit the side of the artist, traverse the street, and gain the Piazza of Santo Spirito.

The space is tranquil and pleasant to the eye, with some lingering remnant of green shrubs and trees in autumn weather, a fountain glistening, and a group of women seated together knitting and gossiping as they watch the children at play. Unlike the gray, arid desolation of the wind-swept Piazza Santa Croce, the picturesque and lofty palaces surrounding the Square of Santo Spirito do not redeem the enclosure from a modern aspect. The yellow and brown leaves fall noiselessly from a withered tree about the group of women. Saint Martin's Day! The soft languor of the second summer broods over this nook of the town, shut in by tall houses terminating in projecting roofs and *loggie*, painted with half-effaced frescos. The bells burst forth with a sudden clamor in honor of San Martino. The popular saint of the Middle Ages, the soldier who shared his cloak with the beggar at Amiens on a cold night, embodying all benevolence in charity, is pleasantly associated in Italy with the hazy warmth of still November days. What varied memories their clamor evokes on this spot! Here was held the fair of the Guild of Wool on the Festa of San Martino, the 11th of November, until the year 1452, when it was transferred to Santa Croce.

The church is vast, stately, and cold, — a repellent edifice, where the closing door awakens hollow echoes, shutting out hopelessly the mellow world of sunshine of Saint Martin's Day, and deserted, in appearance, save for the presence of a few desultory worshippers. The interior is a polished temple of precious marbles, icy pavement, fine pictures, and vast aisles of columns; but it possesses neither the quaint attractiveness of the little Church of the Apostles on the quaint Piazza del Limbo, reputed to have been endowed by Charlemagne, nor the calm beauty of Santa Maria Novella. In our day, with the Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau as the lingering remnant of religious

spectacles dramatized, let us pause beneath the dome of Santo Spirito, listening to the melody of the bells.

In 1470, Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, accompanied by his duchess and court, paid a visit to Lorenzo the Magnificent. The item of history is sufficiently suggestive. The duke travelled over the pass of the Apennine with litters, mules richly caparisoned, soldiers, pages, and dogs and falcons of the chase. The reception of the courtly Lorenzo was suited to guests of such luxury, and the Flower City was made to wreath herself in smiles for one of the powerful friends and dangerous adversaries of the age, in the petty warfare of the small Italian States. Florence acquitted herself gracefully of the task imposed upon her of exercising a princely hospitality, as she has received since many a sovereign ruler of diverse nationalities.

Among the entertainments devised on this occasion by the Signory and the people, three sacred spectacles were given, to the great admiration of the Lombard mind: the Annunciation of the Virgin was enacted in the Church of San Felice, the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles in the Church of Santo Spirito, and the ascent of Christ into heaven at the Carmine. The quaint rustic impersonation of Biblical scenes on summer days among the Bavarian hills must yield precedence in splendor to those earlier pageants of Italian churches. To-day Santo Spirito is silent and cold. We may muse on the tradition that Luther, a humble pilgrim monk, on his way to Rome, preached here, and find some echo of his threatening voice in the reverberations of the closing door.

Galeazzo and Lorenzo, no doubt emulating each other in exchange of compliments and deeper diplomatic dissimulation, surrounded by the throng of ladies, sparkling with jewels, once sat in the then existing older church,

to enjoy the pageant prepared by Maestro Cecca the engineer, on the memorable day March 22. By means of those mechanical contrivances which suggest the later achievements of Leonardo da Vinci and modern stage scenery, the space above the choir of the sanctuary was converted into a sky, where angels hovered amid rosy clouds reaching up to the giddy height of roof, studded with stars. These seraphic beings — pretty boys of the age of thirteen years — flew about, or turned in mazy, harmonious measures to the strains of sweet music, joining hands in revolving circles, or moving softly with arms entwined, as one beholds them in ancient pictures and in the frescos of a cupola. At the summit sat the *Padre Eterno* enthroned, with Christ on His right hand. Cherubs of eight years old fluttered about the throne, holding in their midst the dove. Below was arranged a chamber, illuminated with torches, in which sat the Apostles and the Madonna at a supper-table, in easy and natural postures. In the space nearer the pavement, a box or pavilion held the actors who declaimed the different portions of the *fiesta*. At a suitable moment the luminous dove held by the cherubs floated down to the group of expectant Apostles. Garlands of oil-lamps were placed amid the clouds and decorations, shedding abroad scintillations of radiance which amply satisfied the sumptuous Duke of Milan and the bland Tyrant of Florence, unused to electric globes, gas, and magnesium wire.

Behold! the *fiesta* terminated, the guests and the crowd departed, a porter, who deserves a place in the history of the city as own brother of the *facchino* of the public squares of to-day, set fire to a socket of wood among the draperies, and the entire Church of Santo Spirito was burned to the foundations. If we cross the aisle to that altar, we may still contemplate with respect the wooden crucifix alone saved from the conflagration, when even

stone crumbled in the intense heat, — a fact inspiring veneration of the relic in the population.

From what source emanates our first vague belief that vast and frequent incendiarism has not visited Italian towns, with their narrow streets, towers, and damp fortress walls? The pages of Malespini and Villani make frequent allusion to fires, as now destroying several palaces and half of a street in the vicinity of the Porta Rossa; again as damaging the building of the Guild of Wool, in the rear of the Church of Or San Michele, or as in 1331, on the eve of the Festa of Saint John, burning all the shops of the Ponte Vecchio, and occasioning the death of two boys. How did such fires occur in these mediæval mansions, where furniture consisted of a few benches, chairs, and tables, and master and mistress ate from the same trencher, lighted by the torch held by an attendant? Petroleum did not then exist, as utilized to illuminate austere interiors; but the *lucerna*, fed by olive-oil, may have ignited the store of flasks in the cellars, and bundles of straw from the country property. Hose, ladder, and engine, with the trim corps of *pompieri* in uniform and helmet, did not then answer the summons of the telephone, and such primitive water-dipping from well, cistern, or river as the warriors and citizens of the Middle Ages exercised, was insufficient to quench the furious conflagrations that consumed entire quarters of the town.

Other relics are treasured in chill Santo Spirito, possessing a curious historical interest. A leg and a foot of Saint Barnabas are here preserved, — a saint held in much reverence by the Florentines as having aided the commonwealth in time of war.

In the year 1289, when Florence did battle with Arezzo, and the contest of Campaldino was pending, the priors of the city took a nap after the noonday meal, as was their custom, having watched during the preceding night in

doubt and anxiety of mind as to the issue of the conflict. There is an element of comfortable maturity of burgher life in the picture. The priors, having partaken of their noonday meal, nodded, dozed, forgetful of national troubles, none the less vital to their hearts because the world was then so small, and one city fought with another. Lo! a clarion cry resounded through the drowsy noonday stillness of the council-chamber, and a voice uttered these words, "Arise! the Aretines are defeated!"

The priors awoke, rubbed their eyes, and sprang to their feet. The town still dozed. No messenger had arrived in hot haste from the field of battle, bearer of the glorious news, nor did he appear until the vesper bell rang of that memorable evening, when the Florentine victory was confirmed. All were aware that Saint Barnabas had spoken, as clearest means of explanation of the spiritual telegraphy of the noonday. No wonder Santo Spirito cherishes the relic of so friendly a saint.

If devoted disciples of Galileo severed the fingers of his right hand after death, still preserved in the Museum, and Pico della Mirandola the younger fished in the waters of the Arno for the heart of Savonarola, after the ashes of the martyr had been cast from the Ponte Vecchio to the tide, why not a leg and a foot of good Saint Barnabas in Santo Spirito, who awakened the priors from their *siesta* to give them intelligence of victory? Saint Barnabas was also made patron of La Scarperia, in Mugello, having appeared in the clouds, aiding the Florentine army.

"There! I think I have got the autumn coloring tolerably well; and the mellow, golden tone of the horizon is better than photography, after all!" exclaims the artist, putting a few finishing touches to her sketch.

She rapidly encloses the study in the margin of window, makes the pot of geranium bloom in the foreground with a sweep of the brush, not omitting a dab of white paint on

a leaf, in relief, for the tiny snail. We are back in the microscopical kitchen of the *trinaja*, with the shaft of church tower visible, rising above the pot of geranium in the narrow casement.

"A thousand thanks, Elena!" adds the artist, putting up palette and brushes. "When I am rich I will return and buy all your lace."

Elena smiles, is flattered by the use made of her kitchen window, and bids us farewell with all possible grace of animation.

At the door we meet the ivory-worker returning home. He is a short, stout man, with blond hair standing on end all over his head like a thick brush, a sulky expression, and a deep wrinkle across the brow. The husband of the lace-vender should have been Stentorello, the typical Florentine man-servant, dexterous, unscrupulous, and full of wiles. Elena stands at the summit of the flight of broken steps, her dainty buckled shoes, with the perilously high Louis Quinze heels, visible to advantage. She greets her mate in a hissing whisper,—

"I saw thee on the street with her just now!"

"Eh! my cousin from Cortona, and an honest woman enough," protests the ivory-worker, in a tone of irritation.

"She, or another! What does it matter? If the worst comes, there is always the river for me. Ah! I am weary, weary of thy Florence! The air is so low and languid here, it stifles and kills me by inches. Over yonder in my country of Ravenna people are healthy and wise. It is I who tell thee so!"

You glance at your companion inquiringly, venturing to hint, "In the shadow of the church tower tragic possibilities seem perpetually to brood. The little lace-woman is not one to die peacefully in her bed."

The strong and serene features of the artist remain undisturbed, as she turns to gaze at the sunlit campanile.

"Sunshine and shade, smiles and tears," she responds. "Who knows but the music of the bells may yet lead poor, wayward Elena to heaven?"

V. A BLACKBIRD.

On the spring day a gift is thrust upon the unwilling recipient of the Florence Window by the peasant boy Cecco, his brown little face beaming with good-will, and the strong white teeth of the dry crust and fruit eating race gleaming between ruddy lips. The gift is a blackbird in a little osier cage. "It is a trained blackbird [*merla maestrata*]," Cecco announces triumphantly.

The boy utters a little clucking note coaxingly; and the blackbird, cocking its head on one side, as if listening attentively, watching him with a bright, beady eye, begins to whistle melodiously a range of song, halting abruptly at the end. Cecco shares the pleasure of the bird amateur of all lands, the humble bullfinch of cottage homes, and the rich songster of the Thuringian forest, so welcome a member of the German family.

The lad is a son of the *contadino* of a property situated on the slope of Mount Oliveto, and forms a member of a patriarchal family numbering sixteen, of three generations, dwelling together in the harmony of a bean and oil, *polenta* and cheese consuming household of weekly routine, with meat on Sundays. He is a heavily built boy of twelve years of age, and will grow to a vigorous manhood, capable of hard work in the fields and vineyards. In outward appearance he is as thoroughly and clumsily rustic in his coarse jacket, heavy boots, and weather-beaten hat as if he dwelt in one of those hamlets perched on the slopes of the Apennines, reached by hours of slow climbing in a dilapidated and dusty *diligence*, or amid the tobacco plantations of the district of Arezzo, instead of

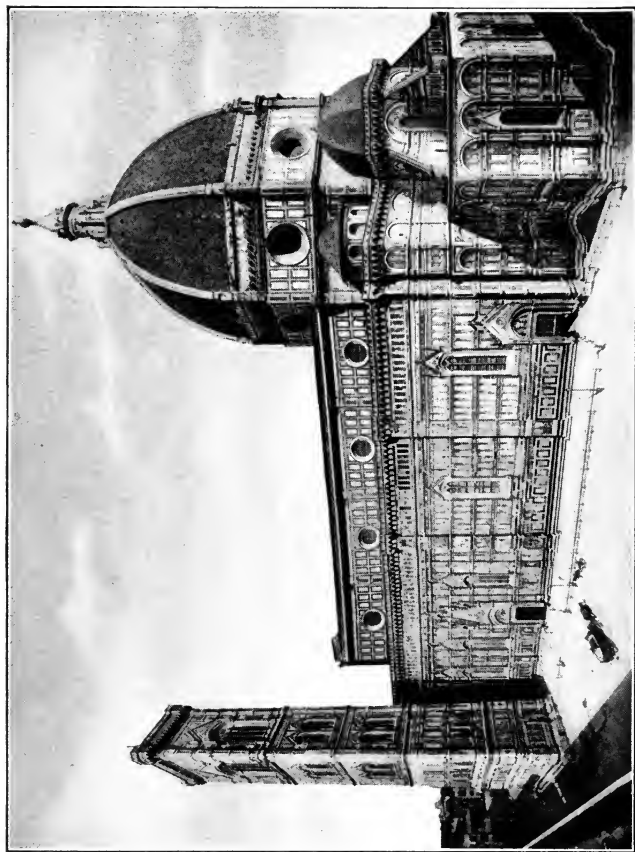
descending the road to the gate of San Frediano, or gaining the Cascine by the suspension bridge to share every public spectacle and *fiesta* of the town. The country thus encircles the Flower City, fringing her very walls with olive-trees, iris, and poppies, the transition to fresh meadows and stretches of ripening grain being wholly devoid of the phases of unsightly suburbs characteristic of most capitals.

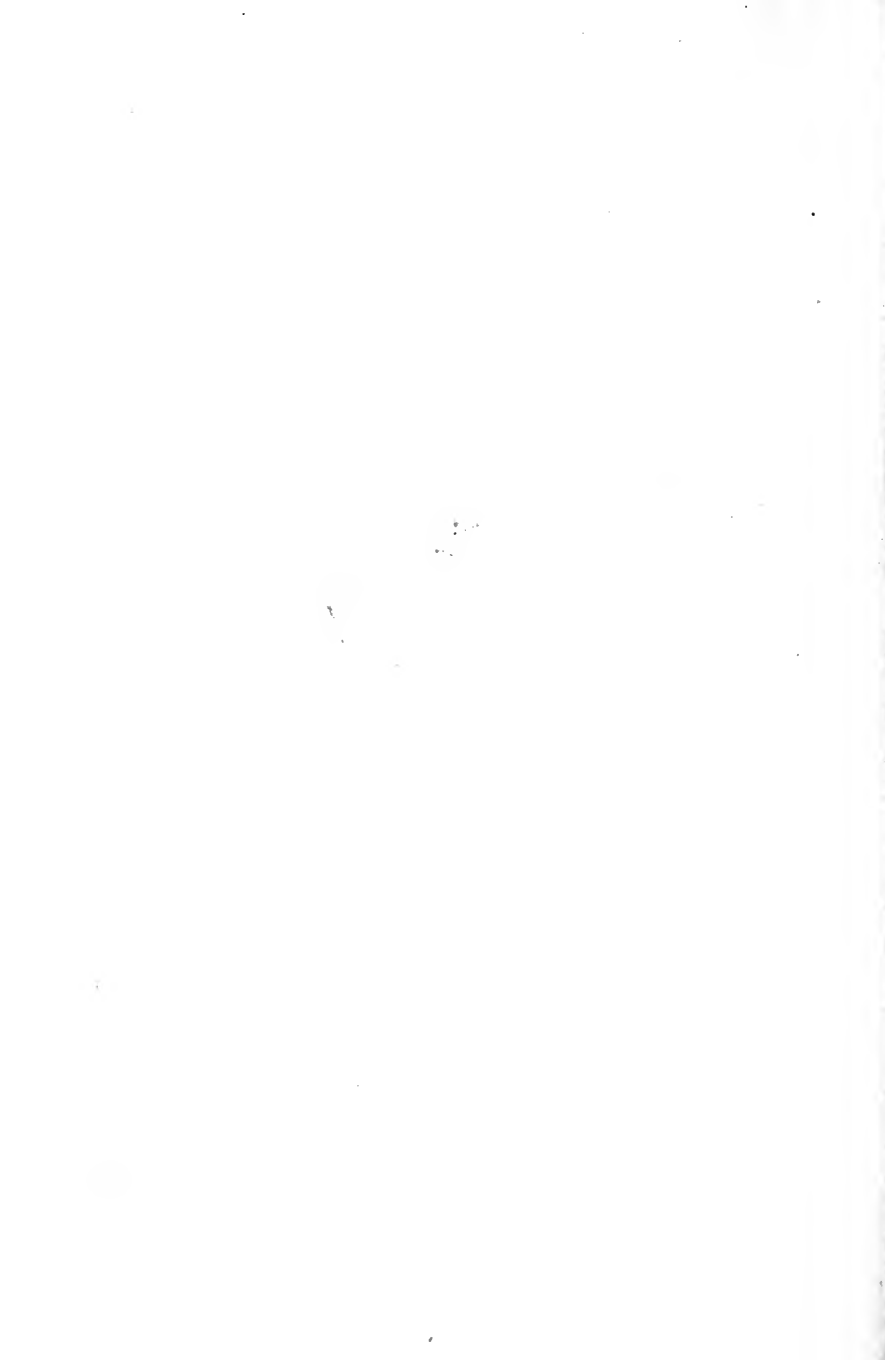
Cecco is naïvely a country lad, yet from the stone farmhouse, painted yellow and huddled against the hill where he was born, with the barnyard and ricks of straws adjacent at the gate of the villa, he may see all the church towers and the city outspread below, with the airy shaft of the Palazzo Vecchio rising in delicate tracery out of the silvery mists of morning fog. In the routine of the year life is still as primitive on the side of Oliveto as it was for the Latin farmer who sowed and reaped in tranquil contentment, and sought his bed by the light of the stars. Cecco, barefooted and joyous, guides the gray oxen, muzzled with twigs of osier, that drag the plough through the furrows beneath the olive-trees, in the early spring and later July or autumn sowing. He assists in gathering the harvest of figs from the gnarled and venerable trees that have bent beneath a load of luscious fruit since he was born, and has inflicted on himself many an attack of sore throat and fever by undue feasting on the small purple variety with a deep red pulp. On the women of the household devolves the duty of drying in the autumn sun, outspread on boards, and frequently sprinkled with caraway-seeds, a humbler native fruit much prized by the town, — especially at the season of the nut fairs, held at the gates during the Sundays of Lent, — while not rivalling in quality the figs of the Orient.

In September begins that exciting and anxious period in the existence of the *contadino* when the vineyards must be guarded day and night, gun in hand, and accompanied

by the faithful, if sinister, wolfish woolly dog of the property. No quarter must then be accorded to the enemy either by the dog's fangs or the loaded weapon; and the warfare waged has all the briskness of perpetual skirmishing. The tempting clusters of ripening grapes sway in pendent masses of bloom and fragrance, purple, black, and golden green, from the shrivelled vines; and skurrying youth, with the instinct inherent in urchinhood of all lands, will creep through a hedge and risk having every bone broken, not to mention heads, if only a coveted bunch may be rifled. Nay! theft occasionally reaches the magnitude of basket-loads, when lawsuits result, it being clearly proved that one's neighbor is not above reproach where grapes are in question. Our Cecco assists in the valiant defence of the soil, acting as scarecrow by day, while the father or married brother sleeps after the ceaseless vigils of midnight. On more than one occasion he has put to flight some stealthy reprobate of his own age, with the dog at his heels, who has vaulted over a wall only to fall into the clutches of a couple of majestic *carabinieri* on the highway, pacing along intent on the same aim of protecting the vineyards.

Later arrives the period of festivity in fruit-gathering and wine-making. In the rare seasons when the olive-trees yield an abundant harvest, Cecco must aid in kindling fires in the storehouse in severe winter weather, not for the luxury of warming his own purple fingers, but to prevent the clear amber olive-oil from becoming chilled, and henceforth clouded in quality. Life has many *festas* for the boy whose purse is so light. He is not too poor to eat pears and cheese together on occasion, — a favorite Tuscan *ensemble*; while in winter he sometimes buys a huge slice of sticky, brown chestnut cake of one of the venders who carry a dish and a stool about the streets and suburbs for the convenient sale of the delicacy. Sultry summer yields





him the revelry of a penny portion of watermelon in the vegetable shops outside the Porta Romana. Many an illumination of town and hillside has Cecco witnessed, loitering near the terrace walls of Bellosguardo, in company with his brothers, all singing *stornelli* and *rispetti* of interminable length, with the spontaneous bursting into song of the blackbird.

The boy pipes briskly,—

“A fine, handsome knife has been given to me,
A head to surmount it, a charm at the end;
He who gave it to me was my good little Tony.”

The Duomo sparkles below in the valley as if a gigantic net of fiery beads had been drawn over the bulb of cupola, while the campanile rises in the soft obscurity of darkness like a shaft of quivering flame, and fireworks burst in bouquets of parti-colored bombs, stars, and whirling wreaths on the Piazza Michelangelo. For the rest, he is a swift matutinal messenger, fetching a flask of rich milk, a dainty pat of butter stamped with the mysterious letters B. C., fresh eggs, a store of walnuts from the trees of the property, and occasionally salad, or the practical potato. Why has he brought the unhappy blackbird to mope, a prisoner, within the barred casement of the Street of the Watermelon, instead of greeting the summer dawn, with his rich notes from his tiny cage, suspended on the wall of the farmhouse at home? Was the boy actuated by the graceful instinct of the people in wishing to make a present, however modest, in acknowledgment of any favor received? Is there shrewd calculation of the approaching *Pasqua* (Easter), in the thrusting of the blackbird on your acceptance, — much as Montmorency, the dog, brought a dead water-rat to the supper-party in the Thames boat, acting according to his lights?

“The poor *merla* dislikes the town,” you demur.

Cecco laughs incredulously. The actual sentiments of the *merla* in the transaction have never occurred to his mind.

"Pray take it back to the country and keep it, at least for the summer."

Cecco shakes his head resolutely. His feelings are not wounded, but he does not intend to take back the bird, fond as he was of feeding and training the pet. Easter is so near at hand. Like the foreign young lady who is informed by the whole smiling family that the last baby of the porter's wife is to be named for her as a tribute to her amiability, you wonder what may be expected of you in the future.

"Impossible!" says Cecco, with another shake of the head. "Besides, I am going to Mass now."

"Ah! Perhaps you are an acolyte?"

"No; Pippe [a younger brother] serves at the Mass."

"Doubtless your family attends service at San Vito in Campagna?"

"Oh, no! We all go to the Carmine."

Now, the little weather-beaten sanctuary of San Vito, with the russet-hued belfry furnished with loud jangling bells, nestled on the slopes of Bellosguardo between the Villas Niccolini and Nuti, is the parish church of the country-side, and the great events of life, birth, marriage, or death, will be marked for little Cecco in that temple. Attendance at the superb and lofty Church of the Carmine on the part of the rustic lad surprises and amuses a trifle. You follow him through the labyrinth of narrow byways of the Old Market-place and Ghetto, along a mediæval alley which is like a mere fissure in the masonry, and suggestive even now of the lurking assassin of former times, and the stealthy flight of the thief of to-day to the Lung' Arno Acciajuoli, and thence across the Trinità Bridge. How grateful the shade of the opposite Lung' Arno

Guicciardini usually, with the vivid and rich contrast of coloring of the long line of buildings shining of a golden yellow tint in the sunny glow, with reflections in the river below! To-day fog lingers after a long period of rainy weather, and the tones of both banks are neutral and dull. The brink of the Ponte Carraia is reached, the Borgo San Frediano traversed, and the Piazza Carmine opens before you, swathed in mists.

The square is irregular in form, arid, unkempt. Barrows of venders of small wares and loads of household furniture dragged by vociferating porters seem to contend for supremacy on the spot. The sunshine lies warm on this southern exposure, and ragged forms gather to enjoy the genial warmth. Beyond the limit of palace to the westward lies a No Man's Land, where the pedestrian must not venture, — the Florentine Ghetto, Seven Dials, or Five Points, since the demolition of the Old Market, where poverty and crime herd, crushed back to the limit of town wall. In this unattractive, even unsightly place, devoid of shrubs, fountain, and statue, and with that mildew stain of San Frediano quarter on the margin, the church, with rough, unfinished façade, stands at the farther extremity, in no wise beautiful externally, unless for grandeur of dimensions.

Little Cecco cannot take the blackbird back to the country again in the tiny cage, because he is going to attend Mass in the Church of the Carmine.

On such slender threads of incident does thought turn for the wayfarer in the Flower City, clothing faded images with fresh colors for each new-comer, and affording food for musing speculation. The Carmine inspires a sudden and vivid interest in your mind. Along the route and even across the river the bells have summoned you to contemplation of an ancient shrine, and to a consideration of the antiquity of the Carmelite order. The sanctuary rests

embalmed in the sunshine, fog, and rain of the softly lapsing centuries, while the bells ring. Formerly thrust beyond the boundary of city wall, the Florentine Bishop Giovanni laid the foundation-stone of the sacred edifice in 1262. Cione Tifa di Rinieri Vernacci, of the parish of San Felice, and parent of that Messer Petrello of the Ghibelline faction who signed the treaty of peace between Guelph and Ghibelline, on the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, in the presence of the Latin legate, left money for the purpose of completing the church. His testament was fulfilled by his widow, Donna Agnes. These stones must have been cemented together into a completed whole very slowly, for the first ceremony of consecration did not take place until the year 1436, when Pope Eugenius IV. deputed Bishop Ambianense, aided by Fra Ludovico Mairini of Lucca, while some further rites took place in 1438 under Fra Natale, Bishop of Venice.

The fog drifts in low curling wreaths across the open space, now drawing close an impenetrable curtain of white vapor, and again lifting to reveal glimpses of moving shapes, portions of buildings, hints of boundaries more suggestive than complete disclosure.

In a group of pedestrians approaching the American church for the customary Sunday service, located in a nook of the Carmine wall, like the nest of certain sea-birds attached to a cliff, is a lady wearing an eccentric costume composed of richly blended striped stuffs. Lo! she is not a modern traveller, but the transient embodiment, dawning and vanishing in the fog, of the earlier travellers from afar, the Carmelites, clad in those Oriental robes of the hermits of Mount Carmel which displeased the grave Florentines, as too much resembling the garb of the penitents and prisoners of that century. The personality of these Eastern pilgrims must have possessed a charm to Italy as picturesque as their odd garb. Belonging to a religious order

older than the birth of Christ, founded by the Prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel, they fled to Europe in 1242, driven from Palestine by the Saracenic invasion. They were received at Venice, Bologna, and Brescia, where communities were established.

The lady in the conspicuous dress vanishes in the door of the American church. The Carmelite monk of past centuries was forced to lay aside his striped robe and assume a brown garb, with a white mantle.

Now the shaft of the campanile pierces the soft mists, and the dome of the church looms through the pervading obscurity. The voice of the bells chimes the strokes of the years, the passing knell of the centuries. Charity is the burden of the melodious cadence of this belfry. The linked note of history is that the first song emanating from the tower sounded in 1396, while the arms of the Alberti sculptured on the edifice lead to the supposition of building by this noble family. Another record is that Maestro Tommaso de Parrino, who fused the first bell, repaired it in October, 1435. The bells were all given by charity, the names of the donors being inscribed on the metal, and the number receiving addition in April of the same year.

The fog shifts and dissolves capriciously, as if dispersed by the pealing of the bells. The steps and great portal of the church become suddenly visible, crowded with groups of loiterers. Little Cecco enters. How magnificent is the interior of the Carmine in contrast with the chill and austere seclusion of Santo Spirito! The place is warm with clouds of incense, colored frescos, gilded cornices and altars, and elaborately carved marble tombs. The rustic lad might well be awed, and feel himself ill at ease in this splendid temple of the town, preferring to seek his own sphere in the little parish church of San Vito in Campagna. Not at all. Cecco walks deliberately up the vast nave, his quick glance roving about from side to side.

Two little girls with fluffy blond curls, like the cherubs of the altar pictures, trot up to him, pulling his jacket, or embracing his knee with chubby arms. Cecco smiles vaguely and patronizingly on these demonstrations of affection. The cherubs are his nieces; and nods from various bronzed and sturdy peasant women scattered about among the worshippers in different parts of the sacred edifice indicate the presence of his family. At a certain spot Cecco kneels, but his bright eyes still observe all surrounding objects, animate and inanimate.

An old custodian has placed chairs for the accommodation of a party of tourists in the Brancacci Chapel on the right, once haunted by Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo, and is droning out explanations of Masaccio's fresco on the wall. Filippo Brunelleschi and Donatello, those noble gentlemen, Niccolò da Uzzano, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, Bartolo Valori, and Lorenzo Ridolfi, gaze down on ignorant Cecco from the wonderful portrait gallery designed by Masaccio. What does it all mean to the boy? He could point out the miraculous crucifix of wood that once conversed with Saint Andrea Corsini, placed in yonder shrine by the Guild of Wool. No doubt he is familiar with the descriptions of the great spectacle arranged by Macstro Cecco, the engineer, with ingenious mechanism, of Christ ascending into heaven. Possibly the peasant absorbs all these things unconsciously, — the richness of Masaccio's frescoed portraits, and the lofty spaces of dome and aisle, — as the earth drinks in the rain under the olive-trees of his own hillside. Swept away in youth by the chances of conscription or emigration, Cecco would be found to possess an intuitive education in art, such as is eminently Tuscan, if not Florentine, albeit his daily conversation might never rise above the level of eating and drinking, the *bere e mangiare* perpetually on the lips of the race.

The fog sweeps low over the town, once more threatening rain, and the atmosphere is chill, depressing, enervating. Easter is a bead slipped to and fro on the cord of spring festivals; but this day seems farther removed than a week from the *Pasqua*, redolent of flowers and sunshine, even in association. In the Street of the Watermelon the blackbird sits huddled in his cage, a bundle of feathers, a dismal prisoner. He moves and utters a soft note. Perhaps he hears Cecco, the human blackbird, piping on the slopes of Monte Oliveto, while his elder brother twangs his favorite guitar:—

“Mother, if Maria Rosa I may not take,
I'll to Loret's, as pilgrim, me betake,
And every earthly thing I there forsake.”

*“Mamma, se non mi date Maria Rosa,
Piglio la strada della Santa Casa,
Mi fa nomito e abbandono ogni cosa.”*

VI. A VESPER BELL.

The note of the evening bell that lingers in the Florence Window floats from the Tower of St. Mark. The campanile, rising above church, cloister, and monastery, is not visible from the casement. Of all the airy chimes pealing from the neighboring towers dominating the city roofs, this one awakens the echoes of memory; and when the great voice of the Duomo, which drowns all minor sounds, becomes mute, the clear tones of San Marco take quiet possession of the vicinity, ringing the many changes on human destiny. It is a melancholy and never a merry bell, vibrating to the wild pulsations of fear, suspense, and every phase of soul-wrung pain and agony, yet with an underlying strength of sweetness, which is like the faith of immortality. “We have suffered, but we have gained the battle; and now all is peace, the vesper bell seems to

breathe forth. "The wrongs and humiliations of Savonarola drew from our brazen throats piercing clamor of lamentation; and only the winds can now carry our voices to sing a requiem above the river where his ashes were strewn. Let history write on her imperishable scroll of the base deed, yet there will always linger in our chime some plaintive reminiscence of the martyrdom, and the mournful cadence of lament of the reformer's followers after his death, the sheep scattered without a shepherd and obliged to confront timidly violence and persecution. The pious old man San Antonino, the beautiful young knight Pico della Mirandola, the worldly-wise courtier and scholar Politian, and the spiritual artist Fra Bartolommeo, — all sleep in the church beneath the shadow of our wings of sound. We ring on through the years, and in the Flower City in the heart of man reigns peace."

All the same, as bells mark the history of a people, the tocsin of St. Mark belongs to the number that rang at Palermo on the eve of the Sicilian vespers, or the sinister signal of St. Germain l'Auxerrois warning Paris of the impending massacre of Saint Bartholomew.

On the mild April evening, the Festa of Saint Mark, drawn by Fra Bartolommeo as the vigorous form of the apostle, in a niche, grasping a book, in the picture of the Pitti Palace, the sound of wheels becomes audible in the quiet Street of the Watermelon, and a carriage passes the grated casement. The harness of the spirited horses sparkles; the liveries of the servants are fresh. The master, who holds the reins in well-gloved hands, is smiling, rosy, and good-humored, of a carefully preserved maturity, with the blue eyes and blond beard of northern Europe. He responds with affability to all salutations, and drives on, the street gazing after him without servility and without envious cynicism. There is none of the dull, pent-up fury of poverty trudging on foot, against luxurious ease

in a carriage, ascribed to the inhabitants of East Anglia by the country clergyman in Arcady, in the contemplative Florentine eye.

“A good gentleman, very sympathetic, and he has been made a Florentine citizen. He wished it, and he is rich.” Such is the comment of the Street of the Watermelon. The alien of to-day has become a Florentine citizen. He has purchased, in some sort, the consideration, and possibly the respect, of his fellow-citizens. Henceforth the Flower City will caress, cajole, and occasionally make her charming fetters of bondage felt by this new son of her adoption by somewhat onerous claims on his generous sympathy. His lines are cast in pleasant places. He may take a mediæval villa in the country, and enjoy the delights of dwelling amid the artificial lakes, *parterres*, and grottos of the Medici princes long vanished, lapsing into poetical meditation like Lorenzo the Magnificent, or indulging in the sage reflections of an Angelo Pandolfini. In a small city, yet possessing the resources of a capital, he may mingle with a cosmopolitan winter society, become a dilettante in art and music, or a *gourmet*, bestowing much care on the exercise of a *recherché* hospitality. In a day of perpetual motion he may accept his home in Florence as a convenient *pied-à-terre*, and flit northward to Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg, or Berlin, or take a yachting tour to Greece and Egypt. Peace be with the new Florentine citizen! Possibly he may follow the example of the Frenchman who recently made a donation of twenty-five thousand francs to the public charities of the Flower City, in commemoration of his own residence for twenty-five years within her walls.

Lean on the ledge, and glance in the direction of the Piazza San Marco, where the bells are ringing. That line of building was once the Hospital of San Matteo. In 1335 Guglielmo Balducci di Vinci, of Graziano di Mon-

tecatini, came to Florence, entered business, and joined the Guild of Exchange. Matters thriving with this foreigner, as he is designated by Villani, he built and endowed the Hospital of San Matteo, and was honored with citizenship in 1365. He was interred after death in the chapel of the structure. How unchanged is Florence! Guglielmo Balducci did not drive to the Cascine of an afternoon in a carriage with yellow wheels. He must have ridden a richly caparisoned steed on occasions of ceremony, or more probably walked about the Piazza of the Duomo and the town on his own feet. Otherwise, are not the circumstances, divided by the centuries, identical?

The Piazza of San Marco is bathed in some lingering radiance of sunset in the sky. It is a small space, most modern in appearance, unredeemed by lofty surrounding edifices, with the low brown walls of the monastery of San Marco and the church on one side, and opposite a cabstand ranged along before cafés and shops. Between, a military statue is surrounded by a few palms and shrubs. A new electric tramway halts on one side of the square. The sweet voices of the blended vesper bells and the shadows of evening are needful to abstract the spot from such prosaic surroundings.

The Botanical Gardens of the Semplice, one of the first founded in Europe, may still be visited on occasion; but was the little palace of the Medici, surrounded by trees and flowers, actually situated on the west side of the *piazza*? Did the religious order of the Scalzo come here to found their infirmary? Were the dens of the lions, kept by the municipality, once located near that line of boundary wall, as well as the quarters of the cavalry? Did the Grand-duke Cosimo I. give to the convent of San Marco a column of mottled marble from Seravezza, seven braccia in diameter and twenty-one feet high, which was brought to the town on the 27th of September, 1572,

drawn by twenty pairs of oxen, and fourteen couples of Turkish slaves, but left on the Piazza of San Paolino until October 9, when conducted to San Marco by the grand-ducal order? The column broke in the middle. Did pompous historical events take place in this modest opening between low walls, such as a solemn cavalcade in honor of the arrival of Louisa of Orleans on June 19, 1661, to espouse Prince Cosimo II.? Is it possible that where the commonplace figure of a man, clad in black, has paused to read an evening journal near a street lamp, cigar in mouth, a brilliant procession once wended its way, when Duke Ferdinand I. wedded Christina of Lorraine, — the bridegroom being escorted by five cardinals, nineteen bishops, the Duke of Mantua, Cesare d'Este, and a host of other noble gentlemen, while the bride was supported by the Duchess of Mantua, the Duke of Lorraine, the Papal Nuncio, and the ambassadors of Lucca and Genoa? The reader of the evening journal blows a cloud of tobacco smoke from his lips; the claims of the historical scenes which once took place here seem scarcely less evanescent.

As darkness increases, the vesper bell acquires its sweetest intonation.

In the month of May, on the completion of the chapel of the Church of St. Mark, built to contain his relics by John of Bologna, the urn with the mortal remains of the good old man San Antonino was placed on a catafalque in the sacred edifice, guarded by two angels. It was a time of unusual and severe drought. The urn was borne forth, with a prayer for gracious and abundant rain on the harvest fields. The procession, composed of confraternities, colleges of priests, and citizens carrying the ensigns of the metropolis, passed from the Church of San Marco down the Street of the Watermelon to the Duomo, the Canto dei Pazzi, the Borgo degli Albizi, Piazza di San Pier Maggiore, Via del Palagio, steps of the Badia, Via del' Garbo delle Farine,

Piazza Granduca, Mercato Nuova, Porta Rossa, to the column of Justice, thence to the Baptistery, and into the Duomo, making a tour of the choir, and came out the Via de' Martelli and Via Larga (now Via Cavour) to San Marco once more, where the relic was deposited on the altar of the new chapel.

Pious historians of the date reproach Florence with not prizing more highly the dust of San Antonino, which would be so much revered by other cities, notably Toledo in Spain.

The memory of a blameless life and the prayer for the soft rains of spring, — such is the lingering note of the vesper bell.

CHAPTER V.

COUNTRY BELLS.

IN the summer twilight leave the shadows already gathering close around the Florence Window, cross the Square of St. Mark, follow the Via Apollonia to the spacious Piazza dell' Indipendenza, and thence skirting the Fortezza, the railway bridge, and the wide Viale, gain the suspension bridge which spans the Arno from the bank of the Cascine to the opposite shore, and the fringe of low buildings comprising the quarter of the Pignone.

The evening is pure and calm, the coloring of sky and earth such as no painter could reproduce. A rosy flush of sunset still glows in the heavens, and renders the Lucca Mountains of tawny and russet hues; Monte Morello basks in an amethystine light of incomparable transparency. Fiesole is suddenly transfigured from the hoary gray tints of earlier hours, as if the rock were sprinkled with ashes, to the soft lustre of the petal of a flower, while the glass of windows in the buildings sparkles, and a cloud rises beyond as the vapor hangs over Vesuvius on a slender stem, and curling outward toward the zenith, acquires the semblance of a gigantic pink plume. On the right hand, slender dark cypress-trees rise sharply around the sombre walls of the monastery of Monte Oliveto, and cluster before the Church of San Miniato, where the mosaic of the façade sparkles like jewels in the last rays of the setting sun. Eastward the hills are enfolded closely, forming the Casen-

tino. Westward the white clouds linger on the summits of the Carrara range, as if they were the fragmentary reveries of the sculptor in the half-formed ideals of beauty, elusive and mocking, that may yet issue forth from the marble quarries as they have done for centuries. The river, dwindled to a mere glistening thread among the pebbles below the weir, has still sufficient depth of water for the erection of a group of little bath-houses along the Lung' Arno Guicciardini for the summer months. Was it at this point that the soldiers, surprised by the enemy of Michelangelo's cartoon, bathed in the muddy Arno? On the other side, the hot white pavement of the Lung' Arno Nuovo, where the buildings still radiate the heat of the day, merges in the long, cool avenues of laurel hedge, ilex, and plane-trees of the Cascine beyond. Twilight deepens to a veil of fragrant darkness in the further reaches of the public park down to the point where the tinted bust of the Indian prince keeps watch over his own ashes beneath a dome of gilded kiosk. The mingled scents of hay and clover, gathered into heaps to dry on the meadows, and the spicy and aromatic odors of rare shrubs, float on the evening air, yet are dominated by the wealth of roses of the season blooming in the *parterres* of the *piazzale* and the English garden, the golden clusters of tiny Banksia roses, Gloire de Dijon, Louise de Savoie, or Niphétos.

Now is the season of high revelry for the fireflies; and the luminous insects dance in mazy lines of light through the dusky paths of the Cascine, here twinkling in a cluster of phosphorescent stars amid the glossy leaves, and there forming interlacing wreaths about the lower boughs of the larch-trees, — Nature's elfin and mysterious illumination of tangled vines and grass, unrivalled by the artificial lamps of the town on occasions of festivity. The noiseless flight of the fireflies weaving in and out of the obscurity of the foliage is like a dream entangled in other dreams,

without beginning or end. The rosy flush lingers on the surface of the river, and the dome of the Cathedral is purple in the golden light, while the cornices of church, campanile, and Baptistery gleam with the reflections of mother-of-pearl.

The bells of the hillside begin to ring out the waning day softly, and to ring in the starlit night. There is an endless variety in the rhythm of the Angelus on such an evening. Now the bells sway irregularly, tossing forth a tumult of sound from their vibrating tongues and swinging cups, and again they ebb to faintest modulations in the distance of hills and valleys, as if a mere breath of the evening breeze. In that golden mist of upper air the bell-fries of the heights about Como and Lugano seem to send forth a high note, thin and pure, caught up and repeated by every town throughout the land down to Brindisi, while the clang of brazen peals on the Adriatic shore are flung across the Apennines to the brink of the Mediterranean, and echoed in distant liquid cadences of dying sound by the islands, — Elba, Capraja, Sardinia, and the Lipari chain. Standing on the suspension bridge, three distinct threads of sound are readily separated from the aerial concert filling the atmosphere, — bells of Fiesole on the left, bells of San Miniato on the right, and far up the Casentino valley a thrilling pulsation which imagination may render into a sound from the Campanile of the Badia of Vallombrosa. Earthward, the rose-tinted river Arno, the fair city glistening with points of light on the surface of marbles, and the long line of dusky trees of the Cascine extending to a margin of willow, osier, and sedge, with the fireflies glimmering amid the leaves. Heavenward, soft cloud-masses forming drifting towers and battlements on the horizon, and the voice of the bells.

I. THE ANCIENT MOTHER.

In the July twilight Fiesole treasures her memories.

Fiesole is ever the Ancient Mother to the Florentine, whether he seeks her olive-clad slopes to enjoy a brief holiday in some tiny country house painted yellow or pink, perched on the rock with his children and abundantly stocked luncheon baskets, or mingles with the crowd assembled at a spacious villa where memories of the Medici and Boccaccio still linger about the old gardens, or celebrates his own modest wedding with a breakfast at a favorite wayside *trattoria*, with his friend the tailor as the guest of honor. He may mock a little at the genuine worth of the coins and bits of bronze, the ornaments of helmets and weapons, occasionally turned up by the plough of the husbandman. He may no longer reverence her emblems of Apollo, the wheel, or even Jove with his thunderbolts, emblematic of the three precious metals. The ignoble quarrel of a Sunday, when wine is new and knives ready for use, may have some latent spark of the old hostility between height and valley when blood is shed. Still Fiesole is ever the Ancient Mother. Let life in the lowlands, with facile and shallow ebb and flow of new currents of purpose, regard the crag above with respect, and not seek to scale the zigzag curves of her "golden road" by means of tramways. Is it a trifling and insignificant matter that the Ark of Noah rested on the summit of Fiesole when the waters of the Deluge subsided, or at least this was the first city founded after the earth emerged as dry land? Such was the statement of the earliest historian, Malespini, elaborated by many a Biblical and mythological fable on the part of the grave and dignified Villani.

There is a midsummer period of glory for the Ancient

Mother when the Festa of Saint Romulo is celebrated, on the 23d of July. There is also a period of mid-autumn radiance on October 4, when in the sunny warmth of a land fruitful in little green figs and golden grapes, Saint Francis is similarly celebrated with Masses in the churches, crowds, and illuminations. Then the grim, monumental features of the pagan town relax into warm smiles, prayers, and all the phases of an emotional religion stirring the temperament of a Southern people.

Fiesole has been converted to Christianity, receives baptism on her knees, has long ceased to consult her augurs, to sacrifice on the flower-decked altars of her temples, and destroys her idols forever, emerging into the full light of a purer belief, led by the hand by good Saint Romulo. Christendom must be edified by the charming example. Far back on the horizon line of the brink of a new era for the human race that momentous event occurred in the heart of Tuscany.

On the 23d of July, from the clear dawn, through the fiery heat of noon and the long sultry hours of afternoon, the bells of the Cathedral of Fiesole have been repeating the history of Saint Romulo, with an occasional accompanying peal from the Franciscan convent church on the steep spur of the cliff above, and a lingering cadence welling up from San Domenico down the hill, where Fra Angelico, the monk, first dreamed of his saints and angels among the olive-trees. Saint Romulo, a noble Roman by birth, in the reign of the Emperor Nero, was sent to the prosperous city of Fiesole, a town forming one of the twelve of the Confederation of Etruria. Success crowned the efforts of the missionary. He converted his charge, and was made the first bishop of a Christian flock. He is depicted in art in episcopal robes and carrying the palm. The fickle sentiments of the heathen populace must have suffered change, for Saint Romulo was slain with a dagger

by order of the prætor, and thus joined the great band of early martyrs whose memory is embalmed by the Roman Church in the recurring festivals of the twelvemonth. All day the gates of the villa on the ridge, adorned with mythical and weather-worn stone animals, dogs, or lions, have opened hospitably in honor of Saint Romulo, now to distribute the dole of small coin to all mendicants who demand succor on this day, or to receive such pilgrims as toil up from the Arno basin amid the cypress and ilex trees to while away the hours, each in his own fashion.

The invalid hostess pervades the place with the grace of her presence. She is a foreigner, possibly an epicurean, and she tenants the terraces, with the dilapidated fountains and rockwork, the spacious chambers of the mansion, with the *scagliosa* floors like ice to the feet, the stiff furniture, gilded chairs, and dark pictures, the paths redolent of lemon, oleander, and pomegranate, as a fleeting ray falls on a sun-dial. The habitation belongs to the Ancient Mother, Fiesole, and the human inmates that succeed one another for a brief season are the rays on the dial that pass, while she remains unmoved. The fashions of these wayfarers change according to their era. Prelates in rich vestments have paced these avenues bordered with statues. Many a party in brocade, powder, and buckled shoes, looking as if they had just fluttered from a Watteau fan, have laughed, sung, and feasted beside the box hedge. The white hawthorn near the gate, which drives away sad or evil thoughts, according to the shepherd of La Brie, was planted by a French lady resident, who essayed to found a salon, and failed. The ash-tree of Odin on the parapet, with the red berries, is a souvenir of the occupancy of a Scandinavian poet.

The day belongs to Saint Romulo. Mature masculine wits may discuss politics over the modern cigar, tossing

the ball of debate of international conservatism and radicalism, instead of lying under the plane-trees in the gardens of Tusculum, discoursing on rhetoric. Youth may wander in the shade of pine and sycamore trees, or gather violets, lilies, jasmine, and heliotrope, at pleasure, in the *parterres*. In the frescoed *loggia* the hostess, a wraith of womanhood, enveloped in white laces and lustrous tissues, is extended in a *chaise longue*; and if the company does not muse over the Platonic philosophy of Lorenzo the Magnificent, — sentiments which once pervaded the spot, — the talk is sprightly, even *spirituelle* at times, and the music of mandolin, violin, and guitar inspiriting.

Below the terrace wall adorned with urns is the *contadino*, with a shrewd and thoughtful face, toiling amid the vines festooned from tree to tree, the “downy apricot,” and “plumy plum,” who may be another Filippo Mangani, the peasant philosopher of the time of Newton.

The bells peal forth sharply and clearly. Each loiterer must quit the fragrant and drowsy seclusion of the villa precincts, and join the throng on the hot and dusty highway to pay a visit to the sanctuary of the saint. The massive walls bordering the road on either side seem to radiate heat; the eddies of dust aroused by passing vehicles are stifling. The stout gentleman who carries a silk umbrella lined with blue silk, pants suggestions that if the spot is well chosen for January or March sunshine for the paralytic or the consumptive exile, who here enjoys immunity from the keen *tramontana* sweeping the Arno valley and the summit of the Acropolis as well, on the Festa of Saint Romulo it is best adapted for scorpions to bask on the rock.

In the *piazza* groups come and go through the decorated portals of the Cathedral, or gather about venders of edibles and small wares; cries rise above the hum of mingled voices, the squeak of toys, laughter, and bursts of music.

If the people in the hot sunshine and dust do not resemble scorpions basking on the arid stones, they are like insects of the cricket and grasshopper tribes, full of alert movement, aimless running about, and revelling in the noise made by themselves and others, brown faces beaming, black eyes sparkling, hands, arms, and shoulders moving in perpetual gesticulation. The crowd is intoxicated with tumult, warmth, light, and sound.

The brittle straw ornaments of Fiesole find a fitting place on such summer days. Fans, cornucopias, fragile baskets of every pattern, tiny tram-cars with ornamented roofs, doll-tables, belong to the warm season, are the golden links of the Ancient Mother's diminished traffic cast down to the valley world, where the straw ripens, the humble wicker wine flasks and even the rush hampers for the *ricotta* are woven in the fields of industry, owning a kinship with the graceful trifles of the height.

A band of slender young priests, in black robes, emerge from the Jesuit college built on the crest of the walls like a fortification, and wend their way to the Duomo on the *piazza*. Does the Ancient Mother smile through the furrows and wrinkles of age, crowned with roses, on the July festival? What are creeds to her gray antiquity, save the passing of clouds across the sky? Time was when a band of Roman youth was sent to her Etruscan priesthood for instruction in the mysteries of divination of her religion. The Tuscan has ever respected priests.

With the approach of evening the animation increases; the spirits of the crowd rise; and the first tinted lamp of the *piazza*, forerunner of illuminations, is greeted with a murmur of satisfaction from all lips.

Nature is hushed, languid, and the very trees droop in the heat. The sun has disappeared beyond the jagged peaks of the Carrara range, a great ball of molten splendor, suddenly quenched in masses of sullen vapor. Storm-

clouds have brooded over Monte Senario and the Bologna pass in the north; scudding mists swirl over from the south to join the impending revel of the elements; the pall of heat on the lowlands in the west is pierced by lightning-flashes; thunder reverberates over the hills menacingly at brief intervals.

The human crickets on the Piazza of Fiesole abate not a jot of chirping hilarity. The lights kindle and twinkle in all the wreathing garlands of paper lanterns hung around the square. Now the slender Campanile of the Cathedral is visible in outline rising against the dark hill-side with the glow of glass lamps; the façade is transfigured with myriads of starry rays; while the archbishop's palace becomes a fairy structure under the same magic of flame. A few rockets are launched prematurely into the sultry, lifeless air.

Then the storm suddenly bursts with crash of thunder, with lightnings hissing and leaping from horizon to zenith, and thence smiting the higher garden walls of Bellosguardo opposite with rosy fire, or, darting earthward, cleaving an ancient cypress-tree of the avenue of the Poggio Imperiale, and hovering mockingly around the church towers of Florence below. A dense cloud drifting from the direction of Monte Morello appears to strike Fiesole with a solid wall of water. Havoc of speedy disaster ensues. The lanterns are torn down ruthlessly by the wind; the lamps tremble and are extinguished; the flowers of the gardens are destroyed by the cutting hail; the trees writhe in the tempest and shed their branches on the ground. In half an hour the pavement of the darkened Duomo is flooded; adjacent roofs are damaged; rivulets gush from every spout, and trickle down the erewhile dusty "golden road," so named because those who assisted in building it had their names enrolled on a registry of nobility. As swift as the stroke of the cruel lightning

the hopes of an olive harvest are blighted. The human crickets, huddling in any convenient shelter, are mute.

Later, when the stars shine forth once more, and the balmy night asserts tranquil supremacy, the hostess, more shadowy than ever, hooded in white draperies, turns the telescope of the terrace for her guests on the rising moon —

“ Whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views,
At evening from the top of Fiesole.”

Departing down the hill, the image of the white form on the terrace lingers in the memory. Is she a creature of flesh and blood, or an element of the deepening mysteries of the night on this spot? May she not be the ghost of one of the Etruscan women reposing on the lids of broken sarcophagi in the ilex walks of the villa? Is it her living voice or the echo of her unspoken thought that reaches the ear of her recent guests? Epicurus says: —

“ To whom a little is not enough, nothing is enough. The modern epicurean need not walk apart, wrapped in his cloak, holding the gods as a dream of dreams, denying the government of this world, doubting the immortality of the soul, but rather with mind and body in the absolute equilibrium of health, and possessing the acute faculty of observation without which even the poet must lack the most powerful chord of his lyre. Too often the means of entertaining his friends in the *triclinia* of his dwelling, waited upon by a few slaves, may be denied him, or supping under the trellis of his garden on a summer evening, as at Herculaneum and Stabia, yet he may enjoy the lights and shadows of the Arno valley, accepting the trifling incidents of daily life in all due harmony with the changing hues of the encircling Apennines, purple, amethyst, tender lilac, and crystalline, steeped in the soft mists of sunshine, and the river flowing under the five bridges. Ah, Health! The boon of health!”

The wan human countenance is upraised to the rocks in mute, despairing appeal of weakness and pain.

Fiesole, the Ancient Mother, treasures her memories in the night. The bells of the Christian churches have long been hushed. The Festa of Saint Romulo is over for another year; and the illuminations have been quenched by a sudden storm. Calm restored to the elements, possibly the Ancient Mother lapses back to her earliest faith. The gnarled fig-tree from the Roman aqueduct, the olive of Latona, the red poppies once used in amorous divinations, the vervain of the Gauls, keep their own secrets.

“Dear to Alcides are his poplar groves;
Bacchus the vine, the myrtle Venus loves;
Apollo glories in his own green bay;
And Phyllis dotes upon the hazel gray.”

II. A ROSE OF VALLOMBROSA.

The rose is pressed between the pages of a book, — a shrivelled, brown, and lifeless flower; but even such decay cannot rob the souvenir of the lingering fragrance, of memory.

The rose bloomed, delicate, full-blown, and with fragile petals of a paler pink tint than its sisters of the warmer, lower slopes, in a path near the former *foresteria* of Vallombrosa, now converted into a summer hotel. The bud was plucked on the noon before the Festa of the Assumption, in mid-August; otherwise the trampling hordes that scaled these heights on the morrow must have crushed and annihilated the solitary flower. The day, the hour, the season, recur vividly with the scent of the dried petals.

The fine road turning sharply to the left, up from the close and shadowless valley at the town of Pontassieve, the causeway built by the Government, along which the

students of the Forest School bore the remains of the American minister, Mr. Marsh, on their shoulders a few years since, affords a first grateful glimpse of grass and chestnut-trees about the group of stone buildings of Paterno, the winter home of the Vallombrosan monks.

The Casentino possesses no beauty in the midsummer, unless association be able to clothe castle and parched hillside with a poetical element of interest wholly independent of reality. The heights are barren, with hard tones of gray and brown, the course of the Arno marked by a débris of white stones, the suburban mansions of crude tints, with closed shutters, the villagers lacking in all picturesque features. The women wear no gayly colored costumes wherein to dance the tarantella in the shadow of a vine-covered *pergola*, to the accompaniment of a tambourine, like the typical Italian peasant girl of the artist. The men, with brawny arms bared to the elbow, suspend skeins to dry, purple and black, taken from the dyer's vat, weave wicker flasks for wine, or lounge in the narrow doors of butcher and baker's shop to inspect a passing carriage.

Hence the refreshment and delight of turning up the government road at Pontassieve into a realm of shade and coolness, where Nature wears her loveliest aspect of the summer-tide in the entire Val d'Arno. Of all the beautiful memories left by a mediæval monk on the pages of the great book of Christianity, that of Saint John Gualberto, the founder of Vallombrosa, deserves to rank among the first.

The story of the noble cavalier who met the murderer of his brother descending from the height of San Miniato on Good Friday, and stayed his hand from a bloody revenge when his adversary knelt at his feet, with arms crossed awaiting death or forgiveness, belongs to the history of the Flower City in the eleventh century. The laying aside

of weapons and the garb of a profligate, worldly life, after the first sacrifice of allowing the adversary to depart unharmed, were equally characteristic of the age, as well as the subsequent retirement to the cloister. Dissatisfaction with the routine of the suburban, conventual rule at San Miniato evinced the highly strung and sensitive soul of the penitent.

We are pilgrims to his shrine on the summer day. What countless hosts of pilgrims have preceded us through the centuries! To ascend the winding road is to enjoy the work of the monk who turned from the city in the valley to dwell in the wilderness. At the outset the senses are soothed by the abundance of pure water gushing forth in silvery rills from the rock, as if struck by the wand of a Moses, dripping into stone basins, and purling down in grateful moisture amid the grasses and tangled vines. Surely pure water flowing from the hills can have no more precious significance than on this spot, unless the oasis of the desert be excepted.

Then the realm of the sombre, stately pines, planted and fostered by the monks, is gained, and on the plateau framed by these forest monarchs stands the monastery of which Ariosto wrote:—

*“Cosè fu nominato una badia,
Ricca e bella, nè men religiosa,
E cortese a chiunque vi venia.”*

There rises the spacious and imposing Badia, unharmed by time, with the walls of a warm chrome color, the fine church flanking the pile at one extremity, and the campanile defined against the background of green hill. The monastery, now utilized by the Italian Government for a school of forestry during the least severe months of the year, bears the seal of a prosperous and cultivated religious body, accustomed to the exercise of a courteous hospital-

ity, as commended by Ariosto, rather than of the primitive shrine of a penitent, who braved the untried dangers of these solitudes for a life of meditation and prayer, abandoning the world. The haunts of San Giovanni Gualberto must be sought among secluded paths and in sheltered woodland dells where fragile ferns grow about the mossy urn of some forgotten spring, where the tiny rill sings to itself in a subdued tone all day, or a dismantled altar, the shrine of a broken cross, suggests spiritual struggles past, silenced forever in the recurring autumns and winters.

On the crag above the Badia is perched the small cloister known as *Il Paradisino*, gained by a steep ascent to the right or by means of a more leisurely climb to the left, skirting the stagnant green waters of an ancient fish-pond, the grassy slope beside the flowing streamlet on one side, and the irregular walls, barred casements, and closed chapel of the ancient convent on the other, by the broad paved causeway, which has the stations of a penitent's walk still traceable at the angles on the margin of the pine-clad ravine, — mouldy tabernacles supported by reclining saints so rudely fashioned in stone that they resemble early Roman carvings. The little grassy plateau is reached with another spring of water flowing limpid and pure into an urn from the adjacent rocks, and by a gate, and tiny vegetable garden, the charming *Paradisino* of many meditative friars may be visited, with the wide expanse of misty Arno valley outspread to the right.

On the meadow is the *foresteria*, — the building where women might lodge in monastic times, — now an hotel.

Perfumes of every grade of balmy delicacy salute the pilgrim. Above the head tower the straight pine-trees, here acquiring the semblance of dusky and fragrant cathedral aisles with the massive trunks for columns, and there lying prone down the slope, felled by order of the Govern-

ment. The hot sunshine distils balsamic scents from the resinous bark, ripening cones, and the very needles of past seasons shed down and sifted noiselessly into hollows out of the reach of winter tempests, beneath the foot. How far do the pines of Vallombrosa journey out into the world? Will this firm, tapering trunk lying across the path yet serve as the mast of a fishing-boat on the Mediterranean or the Adriatic? Surely the rustle of the wind in the branches of the closely interwoven canopy of green far overhead has a subdued, sustained sound like the murmur of the sea. Possibly the pines sigh in melancholy tones their own requiem of the solitudes where they are born, and shudder "through their robes of darkness" when a forest guard passes, gun on shoulder, or those nimble young men, the students, perform mysterious evolutions of measurement with engineering instruments and cords, marking the next forest monarch doomed to destruction. Other odors float up from the valleys, — thyme and vanilla from delicate blossoms starring the hillside, hay and clover from the fields where the white oxen toil, and the flower of some invisible shrub resembling grapes.

The minute mosaic-work of Nature in the plants of the slopes changes its livery each fortnight, in the floral succession of the season.

At a bend of the road a bronzed matron, wearing a blue jacket and a yellow petticoat, proffers a basket of mushrooms for sale, which resemble bits of twisted leather covered with leaves. These tough and poisonous-looking fungi, lilac-tinted, white, and tawny-yellow, are the harvest of the slopes, affording a valuable element of food.

A smiling girl, whose early bloom has not faded, with a red handkerchief tied over her head, holds up coaxingly her store of little strawberries.

The children hover like shy wild birds on the bank with their scanty gleanings of flowers, silvery white thistles,

and golden grasses adapted to drying, hoping to earn a few coppers.

Aged men and crones whine for the alms of charity, withered, bent, and leaning on sticks, their garments like autumn foliage, and with an aspect of having haunted the precincts of San Giovanni Gualberto's oratory since the foundation. These are depicted in Miss Alexander's "Christ's Folk of the Apennines," — a book unequalled for poetical insight and breadth of sympathy with the people, — as well as the slender brown maidens who bring fruit down to the Baths of Lucca from the distant Monte Pellegrino.

The voice of the bells! Where else in the Val d'Arno do the chimes possess such sweetness as when, ringing from the hillside, tinkling far down the valleys, the mingled tones are caught up and imprisoned for a moment amid the groves of Vallombrosa?

Is there nothing new under the sun? Woman, so long sternly excluded from the cloister, whatever her rank and condition, has stormed the height with attendant clamor of children, governesses, and nurses. There can be no doubt the fair Italian siren is bored, and sighs enviously for German spa, Swiss resort, or Mediterranean seaside garden concert. Sylvan glades do not interest her.

The Venetian countess, seated on the historical site of a shrine where pious brethren distributed bread to poor women, in a bizarre toilette with knots of ribbon, yawning over her embroidery and cigarettes, would have coquetted with the monkish founder of Vallombrosa in person.

The German governess on the grass reads delicious morsels surreptitiously from a yellow volume hidden amid the wools and canvas of her work-bag, just loaned to her by the young Roman gentleman lounging in a hammock on the edge of the adjacent wood. The *fräulein* has abundant golden hair, a freckled countenance, and features

rounded to insignificance. She is modestly attired in black, and shod with those stout boots, winter and summer, which evince a well-regulated organization. In the service of an affable and genial Sicilian princess, she is supposed to occupy an enviable situation. In reality, she is bound, Ixion-wise, to a wheel of duty that revolves ceaselessly; and she is never alone. Her pupils are handsome, affectionate, and intelligent; yet when she believes that she holds them firmly, by means of the influence of her own superior cleverness, they elude her grasp and mock at her dismay. She is rendered responsible for them, alive or dead, night and day. Her accomplishments are as varied as the claims upon them. She is expected to read the German, French, and English poets aloud to her patroness, when not lavishing the skill of her own superb musical accomplishments on pouting and refractory young girls. Skilled in artistic and conventual embroideries, her leisure is usually employed in designing or finishing altar-cloths destined for favorite sanctuaries by the princess, who is *dévôte*, and allows her household no meat from Friday to Monday of each week. The governess must be sprightly, attentive, polite, and her discretion so absolute that she does not arouse the jealousy and suspicion of the feminine element in her intercourse with the men of the family, young or old, while she must soothe the resentment of maids and nurses that her position is superior to their own, by many zealous little services of letter-writing and gifts. "My signora allows the foreign governess to come to the table, while I eat in the kitchen, and all because she has a little instruction," says the *balia*, dandling the last baby in the corridor; and the red ribbons and gold pins of her head-gear bristle with self-importance.

"Of course! You like it, eh?" assents the Piedmontese lady's-maid, mockingly, — a sallow girl with pearl

powder visible on her nose, the small head of a snake, a tress of heavy black hair secured by a silver dagger, and eyes suggestive of those domestic tragedies dear to a certain class of French novelists.

Poor fräulein! The young Roman gentleman, whiling away the drowsy afternoon with cigars and novelettes in the hammock, — type of the modern golden youth of all lands, — has loaned the governess Tinseau's "*Sur le Seuil*," partly actuated by kindness, and partly by a wish to tease his mother and sisters.

If the fräulein were another queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva, she would gather the children about her in this unrivalled open-air drawing-room, — the meadow of Vallombrosa, — and weave graceful legends into stories for their delight, instead of on the shores of the North Sea. To the right rises the group of buildings, the monastery, church, and campanile, crowned by the whitish *Paradisi-sino*; and below the belt of oak, beech, and chestnut, all Tuscany extends, veined by the glistening thread of Arno, wending a course from its cradle in the rocky fastnesses of the Falterona to the sea.

Instead, the governess sails on the Nile in imagination for a delightful half-hour, and is herself a heroine of romance, young, beautiful, rich, and respectfully adored by a noble gentleman.

Poor Fräulein Müller! The children, resembling human flowers, in their gay costumes, broad hats, and fluttering sashes, play on the lawn. Here some lingering reminiscence of the circus leads a group of chubby boys to attempt to break their necks by feats of ground and lofty tumbling over canes, hoops, and scarfs held by admiring little sisters, bright-eyed, olive-tinted, and vivacious.

There the daughters of the Egyptian consul of a neighboring Mediterranean port play a game of the fair with painted cards, — a sort of Doctor Busby, — under the

supervision of their Swiss *bonne*, heavy tresses braided down their backs, great dark eyes veiled languidly, dresses yellow, dull red, and vivid scarlet, and boots of Russia leather, making a spot of Oriental color amid the sober greens of the height.

The slender and pale little Prussian lad, who executes military manœuvres all day on the brink of the ravine, using the walking-stick of his invalid father for a repeating rifle, challenges his comrades to the active sport of making war. He wishes continually to *far la guerra*.

The haughty little Duke of Vicenza arranges tin soldiers on a mimic battlefield for mortal combat.

"These are Austrians, and these Italians," he proclaims with patriotic fervor. "One Italian soldier is more than a match for five Austrians. You will see!"

Two Florentines fence with rattans, in admiring emulation of the feats performed on the platform of the Forest School.

A pretty blond Tyrolese maiden reads an English romance. "It is so interesting! — all about love and marriage," she confides to her brother, the school-boy of fifteen stretched on the ground at her feet.

"Mine is much better," is the scornful rejoinder, as he turns the leaf of a flaming-covered pamphlet. "One man has just killed another, and now everybody must help to find it out."

Is there nothing new under the sun?

The fat signora, in a costume covered with gigantic bunches of poppies, and the tall thin signora, in a striped black tunic which renders her taller and leaner, take a walk for the health along the ridge, as enjoined by their respective physicians. They pause to rest at a chapel with the wan spectre of San Giovanni Gualberto exorcising the demon that tormented the monk Fiorenzo still discernible in patches of crumbling fresco on the walls. Here a

spring of water purling into a fountain forms a deep reservoir in which penitents froze their feet in the icy waters. The two ladies are acquaintances of the *table d'hôte*. Once returned to the vales below, they will scarcely meet again, for the thin signora is an aristocrat, while the fat signora is a plebeian. Since both are very religious, do they commune over San Giovanni Gualberto on this spot, or on the edifying example of the brethren who dipped their bare feet in the freezing waters of the basin in winter weather, as an atonement for their sins? No. The lean signora describes the *trousseau* of her daughter, who married a naval officer at Spezia during the previous season. The fat signora discourses on the relative efficacy of certain mineral springs beyond Pisa, once frequented by the gouty Medici. Both agree, with solemnity of conviction, on the abomination of using butter in cookery instead of good oil, and the necessity of sustaining the health with sound wine, — Chianti, Pomino, or Brolio.

White butterflies flutter about the sunny slope. A lizard basks on the chapel steps. Drowsy sounds, faint, soft, inarticulate, float up from the Casentino.

Is there nothing new under the sun?

Up at the *Paradisino* a brisk little American matron, having dined in a former chapel, with a little rusty bell still suspended in the open belfry above the roof, seats herself on a sofa in a chill salon, to chat with the German artist about Scheveningen, Norway, and the midnight sun. In the wall behind the sofa is the mural tablet of a monk of Vallombrosa, recording shining virtues of the cloister of past centuries. This ripple of modern feminine occupation, the laughter of children, and the bustle of every type of pert maid, does not disturb the Vallombrosans in their tombs.

To lodge in the erewhile *foresteria*, now the Hotel Croce di Savoia, on the 14th of August, is to be awakened in

the summer dawn by the braying of innumerable donkeys. These animals, representing every stage of donkeyhood, from gray and withered decrepitude, wiry prime, sober maturity, to foolish and frisky youth, have climbed the height in the cool hours of darkness to join the crowd of country folk that annually seek this charming if no longer sacred sanctuary, to celebrate the Assumption, the most important festival of the year in Italy. The donkeys are tethered on every available spot, and exchange the time of day in their own melodious fashion over bundles of grass and clover.

Soon the church bells, clear and pure, begin to greet the day when the Madonna is especially honored. Movement ensues in every direction. Groups of *contadini* approach by paths over the hills or ascend the road in carts drawn by oxen, singing canticles, — shrill human voices disputing the subdued cadence of the bubbling springs of water, and the delicate melody of the leaves stirring in the wind. The iron gates of the courtyard of the monastery are unfastened, and the portals of the church are open and draped with red damask. The weather is hot and heavy, the sky obscured by a white mist; and a furious *scirocco* wind whirls the dust along the valley, and up through the pines of Vallombrosa in stifling clouds.

The crowd throngs every precinct, and swarms about the little hotel, peering in at door and window, the outer portals being barred to prevent uncouth rustic intrusion. Two *carabinieri* with cocked hats, white gloves, swords, and sparkling epaulets stalk in the midst of the venders of fruit, sweets, ribbons, trinkets, and toys to assert the majesty of law and order, but no disturbance mars the complete harmony of good-humor during the long day. A rural band of the neighborhood, in smart uniform, pants out the Royal March and the Garibaldi Hymn more or

less discordantly in climbing the hill. The people take possession of the wide lawn meadow for their tethered donkeys, nondescript vehicles, and open-air furnaces (*forno di campagna*) placed over a smoky fire, where fowls are frizzled in oil. Then a frugal feast is spread, and each party of relatives and friends partakes of the food prepared. There is no drunkenness and no disorder, unless the innocent intoxication of pleasure in meeting comrades, the music, and the ringing of the bells produce boisterous hilarity of mood.

The ruddy-faced priest, in a shabby black robe, from a remote hamlet over the hills in the direction of Carrara, greets warmly the doctor of Florence enjoying a holiday in the pure air of Vallombrosa, with a professional eye on the children and the copper saucepans of the kitchen. The young students of the Forest School, chiefly Neapolitans, literally dip themselves into the wave of humanity after months of isolation such as their soul abhors. The nobles and the children of the hotel sally forth and mingle with the seething masses with equal pleasure in the scene.

The mid-August festival at Vallombrosa possesses few charms to the spectator. The peasantry have no beauty either of feature or costume. The women are sturdy rather than graceful, with cotton kerchiefs tied over their heads, and a tendency to brown plaid gowns; the men are jovial, bluff, and honest-looking; they form a uniform, dun-colored throng. All day the bells of the entire countryside peal forth in jubilant climax of sound in honor of the Assumption of the Madonna.

Departure begins with the gathering shades of evening. The oxen and the donkeys disappear slowly down the road; and the rural band marches away, strangled bursts of music borne back to the heights fitfully by the *scirocco*, as if the dust had penetrated the polished brass

instruments, and mingling with the shrill, clear chanting of canticles by the girls, taking their way through the woods. Such traces of the invasion as the finely powdered glass of broken wine flasks will linger in the grass and the paths for the unwary.

The calm of twilight ensues, and the vesper bells ring a farewell benediction to all the gay, chattering multitude. Sound emanating from the church tower floats forth spirit-wise, and dismisses the wayward company with a blessing.

The August moon, full, mellow, and golden, rises beyond the Pratomagno, and shines down on Vallombrosa with a weird and shadowy effect. A melancholy silence reigns undisturbed at this hour. The mountains "live in holy families," with here and there a crag of gray rock on crest or slope glistening in the mild, pervading radiance. The pine-trees straggle up the hillside, or dipping deep into the hollows, form patches of intense darkness. Far to the eastward lie Camaldoli and La Vernia, and the slope where the savage knight Otho came forth to aid meek Saint Francis of Assisi to build a sylvan hut or oratory of boughs and leaves, the human wolf touched by inoffensive goodness. The moon gleams on the monastery roof, and forms a white space in the court of the little hotel, where the rose bloomed in a central bed. The students are performing a farce of Goldoni with much dramatic skill, in a tiny theatre of their own adaptation up in a chamber of the vast convent building.

Soon the night rules supreme in this secluded spot. The pines and the wind hold converse together. The transient ebullition of modern life of the day is quenched, obliterated by the sadness and austerity of midnight. Now, if ever, the monks of Vallombrosa quit the tomb to haunt the scene of their earthly pilgrimage.

The Gray Brother wrestles with a fiend and erects the rude stone cross still standing on the ledge to commemo-

rate his victory. Don John of the Cells again pervades the *Paradisino* with the wisdom of a Socrates.

Lo! a cloud obscures the moon's disk, and the Gray Brother on the cliff beholds the vision of a host of black cavaliers or winged demons flying past on a mighty whirlwind, the tempest preceding the flood of 1333, and one crying to the terrified spectator, "We go to punish the city for her sins, unless God prevent it!"

The Abbot Beccheria di Pavia, the Ghibelline, set upon by the populace in 1252, and beheaded in the Piazza Santo Apollinare, showing that holy men should not meddle with politics, may still lament his own temerity at this hour.

The Gray Brother, descending a network of bypaths, may once more rescue the soldier, Bourbon, strayed from Camaldoli, fallen into the grasp of a body of hostile peasants, and conduct the famous leader to Pelago, on the route to Siena and safety.

The two botanists, Padre Abate Don Biagio Biagi, and Don Bruno Tozze, cull blossoms and plants bathed by the night dews. What did they seek in their time, the worthy Frate? Magical herbs wherewith to cure pain, gnarled roots deeply hidden in the rock possessing the virtue of revealing treasure, rare fruit or berries, to distil in blended richness with aromatic leaves into some elixir of life, and render famous the order?

The pure and radiant moonlight floods a space of road once climbed by Saint Catherine of Siena, accompanied by Niccolò Soderini and Cristofano di Gano. This remarkable woman, whether estimated from a religious or a historical standpoint, describes the sanctuary "as a solitary place inhabited by hermits," and in her subsequent ecstasies the mystical passions, the longing to endure suffering, the spiritual conflicts of the sweet and the painful, are surely haunted by the demons of the woods of Vallom-

brosa "that obscured all the city and darkened the minds of the people."

The church bells have gone to sleep. As midnight deepens to dawn, moonbeams or spectral ranks move noiselessly through the pine groves,—a wan host pressing upward to the sanctuary, often weary and world-stained, to be washed in the living waters of these hills. Foremost to receive and strengthen such wayfarers is San Giovanni Gualberto, son of Messer Gualberto, cavalier of the Signori di Petroio di Valdiipesa.

The night wind whispers in the canopy of verdure, and the springs hidden from the moon in the mossy recesses of the dells sing of mercy and forgiveness during all the years since the knight learned the noble lesson on the height of San Miniato.

A pressed rose, dry and colorless, placed between the pages of a book, may still breathe some fleeting essence of the fragrance of Vallombrosa. "Pleasure is a flower that fades; but memory is the enduring perfume."

III. THE CYPRESS-TREE.

The cypress, slender and terminating in a sharp point, yet symmetrically rounded in closely interwoven foliage and branches, grows on the hill of San Miniato.

The tree has its seasons of vigil and festival, like the city outspread below. The manifold associations of years render it a sentinel of the summit, a beacon, black and salient in outline, amid rosy marbles and the glitter of mosaics,—the narrow needle-blade on the dial of time of growth and decay. One does not question the age of a cypress-tree any more than that of a woman. This specimen may be scarcely more than a vigorous sapling of its kind, or may have already attained the full span of cypresshood, and insidious decrepitude may already assail the roots.

The cone-shaped tree has many memories on this slope. If it be not accepted as a step on the route of a Calvary leading to the tomb, from the gates of the Porte Sante up the hill from the city wall to the cemetery, or as a landmark full of significance to a certain type of mind, on the way to the Franciscan convent on which the Christ of the pictured cross bowed to the cavalier Gualberto on Good Friday so long ago, in approval of his clemency to his enemy, a still earlier picture rises to the mind.

The east wind sways the cypress like a shadowy plume.

The church and convent vanish, and a wood known as the Val di Botte grows close, concealing in its depths a little tabernacle erected in honor of Saint Peter, where timid Christians gathered to perform the rites of their religion in secret, actuated by fear of Roman persecution on the part of their rulers. In the year 270, under the Emperor Decius, San Miniato lived as a hermit with his disciples in this grove, called *Arisbotta*. The saint was of royal parentage and holy life. He suffered martyrdom in the city by decapitation, and walked to the one bridge then built,—that of Fiesole on the direct road from Rome to Florence,—after execution, without his head. He found a resting-place among the martyrs buried in the tabernacle of Saint Peter.

The west wind sways the cypress-tree.

The river Arno, swollen to a turbulent flood, flowed past the Flower City,—a Roman settlement still bearing the impress of Cæsar and Augustus, scarcely emerged from a military camp in the field of flowers. San Frediano journeyed from Lucca, intent on making a pious pilgrimage to the shrine of San Miniato. The holy man feared to enter the pagan town, and would fain cross the angry stream in a frail boat, which he achieved, despite the terrors of the boatmen, near the spot where the gate now stands bearing his name.



The cypress-tree shudders in the blast.

The height had been embellished by the erection of the Franciscan church and monastery. The bones of San Miniato were no longer hidden in a little tabernacle in the wood, but enshrined in the sumptuous sanctuary amid alabaster, carved wood, and frescos. Villas had appeared on the adjacent hills, and the graceful city with towers, bridges, and encircling walls in the valley had grown in beauty and prosperity with the unfolding centuries, and was threatened with besiegement by the famous soldier, the Prince of Orange, and the forces under his command. Michelangelo, inspired with patriotic ardor, quitted his mighty task at Rome, and hastened to the defence of his native town, to aid in strengthening the fortifications. The patriot was prepared to die with his own; the artist would fain mask the marbles and mosaics of the beautiful temple of San Miniato in yielding substances to protect lustrous surfaces from the havoc of cannon-balls.

The cypress rises motionless in the soft mists of autumn.

The church bells shed abroad their mellow note from the campanile, announcing the most animated day of the year on this spot, the Festa of All Souls. A dreamy tranquillity lingered over the land, autumn still lending an incomparable richness of coloring to the Val d'Arno. The blue sky melted to opal tints on the horizon line of mountains veiled in purple shadows. On the distant slope of the Pratomagno, Vallombrosa was visible as a cream-colored spot amid the dark belt of pines. Opposite, Fiesole rose on her crag bathed in a violet mist. Between lay the Flower City, cradle of the arts, wearing her most bewitching aspect, her palaces, churches, and *loggie* in blended harmony of tints, fair and noble after so many storms of adversity. The glow of sunshine that softened all imperfections rested on roof and wall, the tower of the

Palazzo Vecchio, the great dome of the Cathedral, and the glistening shaft of Giotto's Campanile. Summer drought more than early frosts had seared the foliage. White dust lay thick on all the highways, where the country vehicles passed, loaded with wine casks, or piled with pyramids of wicker flasks from the harvest of vineyards and olive groves. In the calendar of the seasons purple and white asters bloom in the paths and parks bordering the drive of the Colle winding around the crest of the hill, succeeding the earlier wealth of iris, roses, and lilies that fringe this superb margin of the robe of the Flower City. Vines of the Virginia creeper species, changed by the advance of the autumn to scarlet sprays, clung to the terraces, and bordered the marble steps leading up to the church on the summit. The very atmosphere had soft depths like silvery gauze or the frosted bloom on ripe fruit.

Throngs of people had quitted the streets of the town and hastened from the surrounding country to this shrine from an early hour. The regret of mourners may stir the hearts of the bearers of wreaths and tapers to the tombs, but the *festa* is a true holiday to the laughing *contadini* without a shadow of sad association. "Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is as plainly written on the brown faces of the young men and the smiling visage of the maidens, with their hair carefully arranged in a fashionable coiffure with combs and pins, a little shawl carried over the arm for evening wear, as was ever imprinted on the features of the pagan settlement in the day of San Miniato.

Is there not a certain element of perennial joyfulness in this youthful *insouciance* in visiting a cemetery, in keeping with the race, the sunny land, and the autumn ripening of the grape, the fig, and the olive?

The crowd surges up the marble steps, wave upon wave of multi-colored life, chatting and laughing. Groups of

young soldiers on leave, guards with a keen supervision on thieves of wax candles and funereal garlands of immortelles, venders of tinsel trinkets and cakes incrustated with almonds and the nuts of the pine cone, and troops of children contend all day for right of way to gaze at marble crosses, statues, urns, and the temples built by Poles, Greeks, French, or Belgian exiles, desirous of remaining after death near the campanile of the Flower City. Surely no more lovely cemetery was ever planted by the hand of man than that of San Miniato on the hill-top, caressed by the sun and the wind of the passing years.

The heavy curtain of the church door pushed aside, the ancient temple wears its most curious aspect of the year on this occasion. Flowers strew the pavement, marking the stones above low-lying heads; little golden stars of tapers twinkle on all sides, shedding a tremulous light on the steps leading up to the choir, and illuminating the mysterious depths of crypt, the marble incrustations of pulpit and apse, and resting on the mosaic of San Miniato before his Saviour.

This is a true temple of sleep, despite the ripple of animation of the Festa of the *Tutti Morti*, guarded by the symbolical figures, the doves and lions rampant of tessellated chapels, pillars of Egyptian coralline, jasper, and porphyry, and stained glass, the sunshine glowing through the alabaster windows of the presbytery. The current of youth pervades the shrine. The palm of victory belongs to the beautiful young cardinal of Portugal, sleeping in marble repose, watched by angels in the shadowy chapel yonder, the guest of the monks of Monte Oliveto, pronounced by the Frate Ambrose "more angel than human" in life.

The *contadine* press into the church to perform a rite much resembling an appeal to good Saint Valentine. If

the girls can seat themselves for a moment in the quaint marble chair of the bishop, and repeat a prayer afterward, thinking of a lover in favor, marriage with the object of choice may result during the twelvemonth.

In the Piazza Michelangelo beyond, the bronze David watches in the radiant atmosphere, with golden lights falling on head and shoulders, — emblem of youthful strength.

The cypress-tree stands motionless on the height. When Tribolò designed the statue of Earth for the sacristy of San Lorenzo, to complete the design of Michelangelo, the figure, with sorrowfully drooping head and arms, was crowned with cypress. Such is the shadowy emblem of grief of San Miniato on the Festa of All Souls.

We descend the terraces of the *piazza*, cross the Ponte alle Grazie, pass along the Lung' Arno, and enter the colonnade of the Uffizi, terminating in a perspective of the massive wall of the Palazzo Vecchio, with the tower soaring far above the town. Beyond, a flood of western sunshine pervades the Piazza Signoria, which leaves the equestrian statue of Cosimo I. in shadow, while bathing the Palazzo Vecchio in rosy flames, from the stately portal to the battlements where the shields of the Republic blazed in vivid hues, — red, blue, and gold. In the Loggia dei Lanzi a beggar sleeps on one of the stone benches, his slumbers watched over by the Greek Vestals, the bronze Perseus, and the dying Ajax.

The clear tones of San Miniato's funeral bell follow us down to the town. A scent of cypress, immortelles, incense, and hot wax of flaring candles pervades even the darkening Street of the Watermelon.

CHAPTER VI.

BY THE CITY GATE.

MORNING light penetrates the Window on the Street of the Watermelon. A rose has fallen from the balcony above, and sheds abroad a delicate fragrance which may be accepted as a greeting from the entire rose world, whether from hedge of wild-brier or the plantations of richest perfume in distant Roumelia.

In the rear of the monastery of San Marco, divided by the space of street later, the Persian rose-tree long bloomed on the spot where Savonarola preached to spell-bound listeners.

Thought may be spiritualized, vivified by the manifold associations of a fading rose in Florence. Thought quits the window, passes on swift and noiseless wing the length of the Street of the Watermelon, crosses the Square of St. Mark, and follows the Via Cavour in the direction of the San Gallo Gate.

The day is a Sunday in the season of Lent, bright, balmy, inexpressibly beautiful and serene, in the joy of living. Crowds throng the Church of St. Mark; and the stranger colony hasten to the English service in the adjacent Via Lamamora.

Garden walls, chrome-tinted and already suggestive of spring, flank the Via Cavour, enclosing detached villa and hospital. The babies are abroad in raiment of pink, blue, and crimson, in charge of indulgent fathers. The babies, their vivacious little faces half hidden by poke-bonnets or gigantic hats, toddle valiantly, making vague comments

on a new world of sight and sound, while elder brothers and sisters, acting as escort and flying squadron, occasionally subject them to rapturous embraces. Thus the San Gallo Gate is reached.

Pausing at the corner, what do we see? A wide modern square, surrounded by yellow buildings with uniform colonnades, where the north wind sweeps, and the white dust eddies in clouds, each in their season. Avenues diverge on either side, and the range of Apennines, visible in the distance, is crowned by Monte Pellegrino, covered with fresh snow, rising like a pinnacle of silver in an atmosphere of soft mists. Fountains shed their spray in the centre of the *piazza*; the triumphal arch erected on the accession of Francis II., Duke of Lorraine, husband of Maria Theresa, to the duchy of Tuscany spans the way, and before it still stands the dismantled shell of tower of the old Porta San Gallo. The Piazza Cavour, spacious and sunny, might be a portion of Munich or Milan. There remains only that detached arch, the gate, to indicate the line of wall and rampart designed by Arnolfo di Cambio to protect the town.

The spot is the scene of unusual animation. The Nut Fair, held at one of the gates each Sunday in Lent, whether Porta Romana, Porta al Prato, or Porta San Frediano, takes place here to-day.

What life, color, and movement pervade the ancient tower! Little stands draped with red and white cotton, decked with flags and garlands of flowers, display their wares to the utmost advantage, — walnuts and hazel-nuts, piles of oranges, and the popular *briggidini*, the thin wafer-cake of anise-seed and flour, cousin-german to the Grillade à l'Anis of Provence. Stout old wives tend the portable furnaces in which the cakes are baked by means of the irons with long handles. The slender and yellow youth with black hair, possessing all the qualities of the Florentine popu-

lace in nimble wit, mockery, and great volubility of vituperative power, has a cart laden with glass candlesticks and blue and yellow vases, probably mended by some artist of the profession. A portly man with a bulbous nose presides over a lottery wheel; the booth of the vender of tiny copper kettles and liliputian watering-pots for juvenile gardeners only yields the palm to a rival in miscellaneous toys; while a rack of genuine rag-dolls, guiltless of noses, yet with the rosiest of cheeks, suggests the labor of the convent.

Above the crowd rises the shell of the old San Gallo Gate, with the traces of fresco still discernible within the arch. Past and present mingle in the curious blending of the historical and the artistic with modern life, which is so remarkable a phase of the town.

The Nut Fair, the wide Munich square, the tramway with its attendant throng, vanish, and the boundary of wall once more contracts to the limit of the gate.

In the year 1482 a monk, with neither purse nor scrip, entered that gate. The monk was Savonarola, whose fame to-day attracts the stranger to these precincts. Small of stature, erect in bearing, he possessed ardent eyes, an aquiline nose, a wrinkled brow, and a white skin which colored easily. The city charmed without subjugating his reason. Florence resembled some beautiful animal awakening at his touch to feline caresses, then swiftly turning to rend him with savage ferocity.

The thread of his familiar history is essential to these pages. Can it be too often repeated? Elsewhere universal toleration may be akin to indifference, but here we must be brothers and catholic in the matter of burning candles before many shrines. Through diverse mental windows has that man, clad in the monk's robe and cowl, been scrutinized since he entered the City Gate.

Forgotten in the eighteenth century, scoffed at by Eng-

lish sceptics, and condemned by Voltaire, to the German mind Savonarola is naturally Protestant, after canonization by Martin Luther and the researches of Rudelbach, which tended to prove that the monk of St. Mark prepared the way of the Reformation.

The traveller who beholds the bronze figure of Savonarola seated at the base of the Luther monument at Worms with uplifted finger, and all the fiery eloquence of the Southern orator discernible on his aquiline features, can scarcely fail to be thrilled with sympathy for the German estimate of the preacher. It is also through the German mind that the reformer is valued as a delicate and retiring character, yet a man who, in an age of deceit, cowardice, and crime, cut through the hazy sea of life like a ship proof against storms.

Savonarola was claimed by Verheiden, Jean Wolfius, Bèze, Viguer, Cappel. The Lutherans called him the faithful witness of truth, the precursor of evangelical reform, the scourge of Babylon, the sworn enemy of Antichrist, the Luther of Italy. On the other hand, Filippo Neri and Catherine Ricci, who were canonized, worshipped the memory of the prior condemned to death by their church. Pope Benedict XIV. enrolled the reformer among other righteous souls of his great work, "*De Servorum Dei Beatificatione.*"

The young Scotch or Irish girl, bred in the strictest Calvinistic tenets, exclaims on arrival at Florence, with serious gray eyes dilating, "I should like best to visit the places sacred to Savonarola."

The old American of Puritan descent, journeying abroad in search of health, feels the blood of Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather stir in his own veins in examining the Bible treasured in the glass case of the monk's cell in the convent of St. Mark, with the marginal notes in the handwriting of the preacher.

To the Roman Catholic, by whom the most conscientious work of historian has been done, from fellow Dominican to erudite Pisan professor, Savonarola is ever a loyal son of the Church; and his personality is rendered with all possible delicacy of touch and detail as well as reverence of sentiment, in the refinement of the gentleman, whose food might be of the most frugal kind, but whose cleanliness and purity of raiment and habit must be that of Saint Benedict.

Who can fail to regret that Magliabecchi did not publish all he knew concerning Savonarola in the projected volumes, — the first to have contained the life of the father as written by Pico della Mirandola, the nephew, Bur-
lamacchi, Razzi, and others; the second, the apologies and manuscripts; the third, the testimony of noted authors in favor of the martyr, the exposition and refutation of his adversaries; and the fourth and fifth, the works of the great man? Magliabecchi did not accomplish the task. The eccentric Florentine, with his ardent love of study and prodigious memory, died as he had lived among the books which he had hoarded, perhaps watched over to the end by his friends the spiders, whose webs he never permitted to be disturbed.

Savonarola entered Florence by the San Gallo Gate in the year 1482. He was born at Ferrara, Sept. 21, 1452, of a mother gifted with a powerful understanding, and a worthy citizen of a father. An excellent grandfather watched over a sad childhood when, according to certain chroniclers, the boy escaped from the noisy sports of companions of his own age to erect little altars. He entered a church of the Augustines when visiting Faenza, and heard one of those sermons preached which still possess so powerful an influence on the Latin races in their susceptibility to the charm of eloquent oration and even mere elocution of dramatic and poetical declamation. A pen-

sive youth, addicted to playing the lute and musing apart, while all Ferrara, parents included, trooped forth to enjoy some holiday, has such coloring of romance as the vaguely defined tale of loving a young girl in a neighboring garden, the illegitimate daughter of the Strozzi, then in exile, and of being haughtily repulsed by her. Making verses, playing on the lute, fascinated and repelled by the study of the Platonian philosophy, — such would be the natural preparation for retirement to the cloister in that age.

Ferrara, the courtly and luxurious city, where Tasso and Eleanora d'Este dwelt later, under the sway of Duke Borso might give banquets in the palace; the finer ear and keenly spiritualized nature of the boy Savonarola heard only the groans of the prisoners chained in the dungeons below.

Pope Pius II., having summoned a council to be held at Mantua to consider a fresh crusade of holy war in 1458, entered Ferrara in state, beneath a canopy of cloth-of-gold, while barges, magnificently adorned, floated on the river. Eneas Silvius Piccolomini is perhaps the most pleasing figure in the entire chain of the papacy. His history still glows fresh in the frescos of Pinturricchio within the precincts of the Duomo of his native Siena. All Europe failed to appear at the rendezvous of Ancona, the day for crusades being over. Wise Cosimo de' Medici, playing chess at his villa in the silence of gouty age, made his comment, dry, apt, and the more forcible for habitual rarity of speech. The Pope, an old man, was striving to perform the exploits of youth.

Savonarola, apparently unmoved by these spectacles of pomp and splendor, was writing, "On a Disregard of the World," reading the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Dominic, and had begun to formulate the prayer, "O Lord, make known to me the way in which I am to guide my soul!"

Already he was one of the innovators that follow stray lights or heavenly beacons, and are deemed by their fellows sages, madmen, martyrs. Already he was fathoming those shadowy depths of self for undeveloped powers from which the majority of us shrink, as from an unexplored country.

Then ensued the separation of the family, that terrible exaction of Catholicism in a sad world. Savonarola quitted the paternal roof, leaving a letter of explanation, and sought the vocation of a religious life. He went to Bologna, the second city of the papal States, where he remained for seven years, — seven years of silence and meditation in the rich town of famous memories, enshrining the remains of Saint Dominic. Ascetic as an Egyptian hermit in a lax age, taxing a sensitive frame by unsparing vigil and fasting, sleeping on a bed of sticks, studying the writings of Saint Augustine, Cassian, and, above all, the Bible, committing the canonical books to memory, — Savonarola bore himself with humility and gentleness to all about him.

Evil times had fallen on Italy, with Giuliano de' Medici smitten down in the Duomo at Florence, and his brother Lorenzo fighting for his life, at the signal of the elevation of the golden chalice of sacrament before the altar, the Pazzi as turbulent instruments of the deed, and Sixtus IV. with his son, Cardinal Riario, in the background of political machinations. After the death of good Pius II. a succession of popes ruled, each more corrupt than his predecessor, to the culmination of the Borgia. Savonarola in the monastery of Bologna waited in silence and meditation, studying his Bible until the power of speech should come. "The strong man and the waterfall channel a path for themselves," says the proverb.

The monks of his convent sent him to join the community of the Dominicans at Florence, recognizing in him

those austere virtues which they may have lacked. He set forth and crossed the pass so familiar to all of us, from the curving line of railway through the gorges and cuttings of tunnel in the hillside.

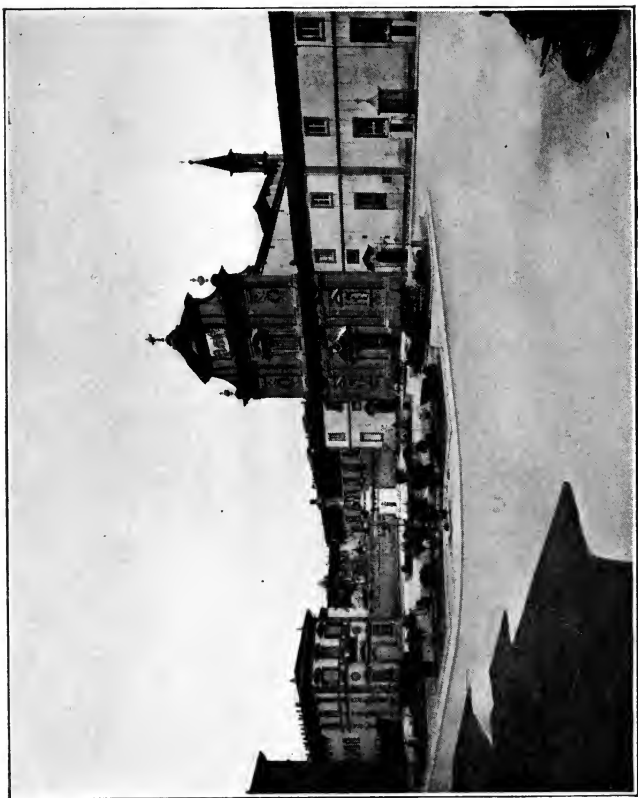
That solitary wayfarer belongs to history, and is a figure replete with the deepest significance apart from all petty tumult of his time. He represents the awakening of the soul of his century and one of the elements of humanity's renaissance. Groping his way, he could only contemplate the career of Pope Sixtus IV. and of the Cardinal Riario, who was squandering wealth in the most lavish entertainments at Rome, where he lodged Eleanor of Arragon, daughter of the King of Naples, on her way to marry the Duke of Ferrara, in a palace built of precious woods for the occasion.

"Oh, that I could break those soaring wings!" Such was the exalted thought of the monk traversing the mountain pass, as the wind blew through the pine and beech trees. Possibly the pines of those sylvan solitudes, with the sky for the dome of a temple not made with hands, caught up then the first whisper of the Reformation, "Oh, that I could break those soaring wings!" meaning the temporal papal power.

Thus Savonarola reached the City Gate, where we stand on this Sunday of Lent. Let us follow his shade. We are led to the convent of St. Mark.

The day resembles the earthly career of the reformer. It is morning at San Marco, fresh with hope and promise; a noontide ensued of fame and usefulness in the preaching of the Duomo, and then came night in the burning at the stake of the Piazza della Signoria. Such was the Calvary of pilgrimage for Savonarola in the Flower City.

A Sabbath stillness broods over the convent of St. Mark, where the echo of civic and religious strife has long died away to tranquil repose. The first cloister, with the



frescoed walls and columned arcades, and grass-plat in the centre, is steeped in sunshine. The belfry of the adjacent church, soaring toward a heaven of intense and cloudless blue, is visible at an angle dear to amateurs, as is the court of the Bargello.

St. Mark embalms the best specimen of the monastery in the form of a museum which we are likely to visit. St. Mark, like Nature in her recurring summers of vine and blossom, also embalms the holiness of certain lives,—great men who have created an atmosphere of their own personality in the places where they have lived. St. Mark is of itself a rich and lovely missal, full of hallowed memories, each page of association illuminated in gold leaf and in arabesque designs of the times, with angelic choirs hovering on half-furled wings, the eager questioning of naïve and youthful faces and of venerable saints to the intruder: “Do you believe? Are you one of us? Then welcome, thrice welcome, dear brother, to our mystical rhapsodies of adoration and the foretaste we offer of paradise!”

No element of pain and terror mars the sunshine of the Lenten Sunday here, for Fra Angelico and the good Saint Antonino dwelt in these cells before Savonarola’s stormy rule.

The guard turns the wheel to admit the visitor, and the cloister echoes to the footsteps of the traveller, red guide-book in hand, or a group of young soldiers with honest brown faces and the aspect of appreciative intelligence and propriety noticeable in the Latin races in availing themselves of the free ingress to gallery or museum.

The convent was built by Silvestrine monks of Vallombrosa in the thirteenth century. The Silvestrines dwelt here for a century, and then after a visitation of the plague, fell into ill-repute. Cosimo, the prudent Pater Patriæ, transferred a small band of Dominicans from the monastery of San Giorgio at San Miniato to these pre-

cincts, and banished the recreant Silvestrines to the humbler sanctuary. To rebuild and embellish St. Mark was a work of much interest to the first great Medici some years before the Pitti Palace and the Boboli Gardens were projected. The library, which comprised the collection of Niccolò Niccoli, was the first public one in Italy. Fra Angelico and Fra Benedetto were brought from San Domenico at Fiesole to decorate chapel, cloister, and dormitory. The proud record of St. Mark remains that it was the cradle of art, literature, and liberty. From these walls issued, later, the cry against Medicean tyranny.

Our first welcome is given by the gentle souls, Fra Angelico and Saint Antonino. The artist wrought those shadowy Christs and drooping Madonnas with prayers and tears. The saint strove to heal the wounds of war and pestilence by almsgiving and the institution of charitable works. Both remind us of Melanchthon. Fra Angelico, in mingling the colors of his flagellations and pitiful crucifixions still undimmed on the convent wall, must have meditated on Melanchthon's summary for not regretting life: first, he would sin no more; second, he would be no longer exposed to the fury and the invectives of theologians; third, he would come to the light; fourth, he would see God; fifth, he would contemplate the Son of God.

Luther might have said of the Archbishop Antonino as of Melanchthon: "Magister Philippus goes softly and quietly, builds and plants, sows and waters, with joy, as God has given him his gifts richly."

Stillness broods over the cloister. Saint Peter, martyr, above the sacristy door places his finger on his lip to enjoin silence, while on the side of the *foresteria*, the apartments devoted to hospitality, a quaint and beautiful Christ as a pilgrim is welcomed in a touching manner by two Dominican monks.

The traveller with the red guidebook and the group of young soldiers troop into the great refectory, where the two radiant angels of Fra Bartolommeo's *Providenza* still feed the brothers seated before an empty table. Thence they gain the small refectory, with Ghirlandajo's *Last Supper* in shadow on the mouldy wall, or linger before Fra Angelico's *Crucifixion* in the chapter-house.

The passage to the inner cloister of the novices, now closed and with the hooded portrait of Savonarola on the wall, also leads to the long flight of steps. At the moment a party of strangers descend,—a stout mother and smiling daughters, flushed, excited, happy in the possession of trumpeting angels on gilded panels just purchased above. These angels wing their flight over the world. Florence may be pardoned if disinclined to similar purchase of the rainbow shapes set in Gothic wooden frames of every shop-window, just as Neapolitan ladies are averse to wearing pink coral.

Stillness broods over the upper floor. The dark roof, with the heavy beams, slopes above the long corridors extending right and left, with the twin rows of narrow doors. That dark roof is suggestive of winter storms, the long corridors of midnight orisons and vigils. Sombre memories meet and overwhelm the visitor at the top of the stairway. In a cell near the landing, refractory monks were punished, as iron rings in the masonry above the stone bench attest. Facing the stair is the cell of Saint Antonino, before he was created Archbishop of Florence. The rich vestments of the modest prelate are treasured in a glass case. The place contains, in addition, a cast of his features taken after death, a crayon portrait by Fra Bartolommeo, and another of the Fra Lorenzo Ripa Fratta, who accompanied Fra Angelico and his brother to Cortona, when they assumed the Dominican habit. Note the genealogical tree of the monks of the convent: the name

of Savonarola has been nearly obliterated by the kisses of his followers. The daylight comes through the tiny grated window. The fresco of the wall represents Christ descending into Limbo. Assuredly, of all the works of the old painters on the subject, this ranks first in the heart, if not in the mind of the observer. Greater breadth of treatment and knowledge of modelling and color there may have been, yet Fra Angelo's Redeemer alone expresses the haste of a divine compassion, in the fullest sense, to liberate the anxious patriarch Adam and his companions from the shadowy depths of the lesser purgatory, while the demons of death, resembling grotesque shrimps and lizards, lurk and scowl behind the riven portal.

Beyond, the reliquary of the Madonna of the Star from the sacristy of Santa Maria Novella sparkles like a jewel with those kindred gems in the adjacent nooks,—the Coronation of the Virgin and the Annunciation, the Predella of each finished with the delicacy of miniatures.

How fresh the charm of a personal discovery of these treasures within the precincts of the old monastery! Each new-comer realizes for the moment the sentiment of a Columbus, and believes himself to be the first in an emotion of just appreciation. Other generations will visit the spot in their day, and experience similar delight in the revelation of the beautiful as a wayside sacrament. The babies of all lands now nestling in the maternal arms, as the Madonna della Stella holds the infant Jesus, will visit this spot on their wedding journeys, and find the sunny cloister unchanged, the lapse of years marked by the noiseless passage of cloud shadows on the dial.

The link of fresco extends through all that chain of tiny cells along the corridor,—the Sermon on the Mount, with Judas wearing a black halo, as the symbol of a dead virtue, after the Greek usage; watchful Magdalenes; and

the lily of motherhood,—the White Madonna, —bending to be crowned by her Son amid the clouds.

The last cell, adjoining the church, with the inner chamber approached by steps, was built by the munificent patron, Cosimo the Elder, as a retreat for himself when he wished to converse with Saint Antonino and Fra Angelico. When Pope Eugenius IV. consecrated the church in 1432, he was lodged here.

On the other side the line of cells is broken by the lofty hall hung with the silken banners used in the festivities of Dante's centenary and the erection of his statue in the Square of Santa Croce.

The library whither Savonarola is reputed to have withdrawn, carrying the Host, when the convent was attacked by the mob, makes a second break in the continuity of corridor. The library is rich and impressive in aspect, despite the empty shelves. The central desk contains the illuminated choir-books, precious tomes gathered from the Badia, the Carmine, and Monte Oliveto. Whole wreaths of children still troop laughing across the pages, delineated by the brush of Fra Eustachio, while the delicate hues of Plautilla Nelli and her sister, the nuns of St. Catherine, remain undimmed. The wedding gift of the Grand-duke Leopold II. to his bride, Maria Antoinetta, in the form of a missal, illuminated by Fra Angelico, finds a place of honor among the choir-books.

This room was once damaged by an earthquake, a most unpleasant suggestion at this date. Savonarola again claims the visitor at the extremity of the second long corridor. The two chambers gained by the outer chapel belong not to San Marco, but to all history, in the emancipation of the human mind from the tyranny of terrible evil.

In the chapel the tablet opposite the door records that Leo X., after visiting the place in 1516, granted an indul-

gence of ten years to those who prayed in the inner cell. The frescos of the Madonna and Child, by Fra Bartolommeo, are attached to the wall. Two busts in terra-cotta of Savonarola and Girolamo Benivieni, by Girolamo Bastiniani, the modern Florentine sculptor, whose imitation of the *cinque-cento* work has deceived connoisseurs, are placed on pedestals and attract the eye by their singular fidelity to line and wrinkle of the human countenance.

Within is the shrine of pilgrimage,—the two tiny cells of the prior of St. Mark. The desk contains the copies of sermons, with marginal notes in a microscopic handwriting; the worn wooden crucifix is placed near the window. In a case such relics are treasured as rosary, hair shirt, a fragment of wood from the burning stake. On the wall of the inner cell hangs the quaint old picture of the execution on the Piazza Signoria, with the two angels unrolling above the blank scroll on which posterity should inscribe a verdict of the cruel scene.

We do not accept Pope Leo's absolution by praying on the spot; we do not worship the relics collected here as having worked miracles; but we uncover the head, touch the wall, the small, grated casement, inspired by a sentiment of profound reverence for a great and noble memory. From these narrow precincts, this threshold, "Savonarola's soul went out in fire."

Arrived by the city gate on that first journey, Florence received him coldly,—did not, in fact, notice the monk at all. Towns are apt to entertain their angels unawares. Long years of waiting must elapse before Savonarola gained a hearing in the Duomo.

The Florence of that day presents the most familiar phase of poetical splendor on which historian, philosopher, and dilettante still delight to dwell. We treasure it like some rare work of art, preserved in the case of a museum, admiring the fair proportions of this model of



a State in miniature, marvelling at the contrast with the rude manners and defective education of the remainder of Europe. Lorenzo's Florence resembles Orcagna's Tabernacle, with richest play of fancy in the harmonious blending of statuette, bas-relief, bust, and intaglio, and greatest refinement of architectural perfection in the welding together of marble, *pietra-dura*, mosaic, enamel, and gilded glass. The massive grandeur of Trajan's column, as emblematic of Roman history in stone, has quite another aspect.

Lorenzo the Magnificent had secured the commonwealth to himself, converting an inheritance of glass into iron, to quote the verdict of Ludovico Sforza. The accomplished man of the world moves our speculative admiration, whether in the athletic sports of a robust youth, capable of drawing sword in self-defence, the poetizing and philosophizing mood of summer evenings on the terrace or in the *loggia* of a favorite villa, surrounded by courtiers and scholars, or the aspect of the statesman, subtle, prudent, sagacious above his fellows. He was the chief architect of that temple preserved for our leisurely inspection by the crystal case of history, albeit the foundations had long been prepared for him. The man of the world had the personal disadvantage of harsh features, a swarthy skin, and a nasal voice. He punished his enemies with severity, is accused of a certain coldness of heart even to his friends, and unscrupulously appropriated the funds of dowerless girls to his own ends. The strong must win, and the weak go to the wall. How else would the Medici have proved himself a worldling? Nevertheless he is a superb figure; and the welcome extended to each of us, in our time, is that of Lorenzo the Magnificent, whose urbanity and courtesy we might do well to emulate. The glamour of a rich individuality is thrown over our sober senses even at this distance of date.

How varied the phases of his character and his rule! Orsini, under the direction of Andrea Verrocchio, modelled three life-size figures in wax of the prince for churches, in the dress worn when he appeared at the palace window after escape from the Pazzi conspiracy. Antonio Pollajuolo struck a medal of the ancient choir of Santa Reparata and the assassination of Giuliano. Once Pope Sixtus IV. had spared his neck, he showed himself a true descendant of Salvestro, *gonfaloniere* of the town in 1370, and of Cosimo, Pater Patriæ, in his prudent relations with such neighbors as the Baglioni of Perugia, the Vitelli of Castello, the Bentivoglio of Bologna, the Manfredi of Faenza. At the same moment he lulled Florence to sleep in false security by sacrificing to the muses, reviving the games, the carnival pageants, composing sonnets, *jeux d'esprit*, and sharing the feasting of gay cavaliers. He touched his lyre and sang of Bacchus and Ariadne: "How beautiful is youth!"

Endowed with a subtle and penetrating perception of all things, and possessing the supremely refined taste of the most refined of capitals, Lorenzo still charms and surprises us by the ease with which he passed from collecting gems, intaglios, and medals, in the Riccardi Palace, to theological discussion, the opening of a Platonic academy, the criticism of antique statuary, the arrangement of the gardens of San Marco as a school of art, where he mingled with the pupils, the consideration of the science of medicine, metaphysics, the practice and theory of music, or the inspection of the clock made for him by Lorenzo da Volpaja, which marked the hour of the day, the motion of the sun and planets, eclipses, signs of the zodiac, and revolutions of the heavens. Latin and Greek were sedulously cultivated, as French was made the court language of Russia under Catherine the Great, but the Italian tongue was not suffered to decline. Add to these interests

war to maintain the boundaries of domain, and delicate, diplomatic missions to Naples and Rome, with the ultimate end in view of the marriage of a daughter in the family of a new pope, and the firmness of the muscles beneath the silken glove is apparent.

Then the chameleon spirit of Lorenzo flitted to the country to beautify his villa at Poggio a Cajano with woods and sparkling waters, fish and game, and watch the growth of rare plants. In the tranquillity of such retreats, apart from the tumult of the city, politics, and the throng of the market-place, the ruler could compose "Nencia da Barberino," — an idyl redolent of the Tuscan soil, people, and manners, — and the "Rispetti," still sung on the Pistojan hills, as far as the Maremma and the Campagna; the cares of the shepherd Corinto, which resembles the eclogues of the ancients; the mythological scene of Ambra; and the spirited poem of the "Hawking Party" (*La Caccia con Falcone*). The cynicism underlying even the "Lays of Carnival," and the epicureanism of the "Canzone a Ballo," have a counterpoise in the spiritual songs, rivalling those of his gifted mother, the aspiration of a soul dissatisfied with glory, splendor, and the wealth of this world.

Supple, adroit, keenly observant of his own horizon, and cold of heart, he must rule or succumb to rivals. Such was the mediæval game of chance for prince and citizen.

The palaces and villas of the Strozzi, Soderini, Acciajuoli, Sassetti, Valori, Alessandri, and Pandolfini rivalled the habitations of the Medici in sculpture and painting, while the *bric-à-brac* merchants of that day were travelling antiquarians, in search of rare manuscripts and objects of art. Antiquities came from Rome, Naples, or Viterbo, the vases from Greece, the precious parchments from Constantinople.

The court of each little prince strove to eclipse others

in the cultivation of art, science, and letters. Milan possessed Filelfo; Modena, Jean Aurispa; Rome, Platina and Jacques Ammanati; while Florence could boast of Ficino, Politian, or Ambrose Traversa. Cecco Simonetta was the minister of Francesco Sforza, Antonio Beccadelli counsellor of the King of Naples, Leonardo Aretino, Poggio Bracciolini, and, later, Macchiavelli, secretaries of the Florentine Republic.

How they glow, untarnished by the lapse of centuries, the cities where the traveller loves to linger in contemplation of their marbles, frescos, and varied architecture, yet all domed by the blue sky which may signify united Italy! How they formerly hated one another, without a thought of common patriotism, ever ready to clamor for foreign aid across the Alpine barrier, so that French king or German emperor might bring fire and sword to the whole country in settlement of petty dispute between blacks and whites, Montagu and Capulet, Maltraversi and Sacchese, Torriani and Visconti, Orsini and Colonna.

Savonarola must have perceived with keenest sense of appreciation the beauty of the Athens of the Arno, the polished ease of the scholars in a community where women eagerly cultivated letters, and already the raillery of a prevailing scepticism was in the very atmosphere. Profoundly studious himself, and able to assimilate such mental food in subsequent meditation, the brilliant surface of a mobile society did not deceive him. The men attached to the reigning house by Lorenzo and his predecessors — Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, and Politian — would have a strong claim on Savonarola as well, and the latter subsequently submitted to the Dominican influence.

Marsilio Ficino, canon of St. Lorenzo, the unwearied follower of Aristotle, Plato, Confucius, Zoroaster, a delicate personality, full of mysticism, with the modest

requirements of the philosopher fond of retiring to a small country property, was accused of burning a lamp before the bust of Plato, and even of dabbling in magic and astrology. Educated as a physician, his faith in the efficacy of vipers' teeth, or the claws of a lion, was only equalled by that in the virtue of agates and topazes, while the influence of the planet Saturn on his destiny induced an habitual melancholy. What marvel that simple Calendrino believed the heliotrope stone would render the possessor invisible? Are there not Americans now living who have carried a horse-chestnut in the pocket, the fetich to preserve from rheumatism?

Ficino, a century earlier, cleared the path for Giordano Bruno, who broke through all servile tradition of school, and forced a way into a wider expanse of science.

The chief claim of Cristoforo Landino on posterity is his revival of the study of Dante. Politian, the poet, courtier, and tutor of Lorenzo's children, could affirm amid many backslidings, "Nature and youth drew me to Homer, and with all the zeal of which I was capable I set myself to translate him into Latin verse."

Florence was more Greek than any other spot save Athens; and the influence of Chalcondylas and Johann Lascaris was permeating all classes. Germans, English, and Portuguese flocked here to learn Greek, as students formerly sought Athens. Alexander Farnese acquired a taste for classical literature at Florence which the old Pope Paul III. had not forgotten.

Statutes of codes of law became established since Taddeo Accorso had formulated them; mariners navigated by means of the stars; medical men followed Alderotti to Bologna, the seat of learning; mathematics and astronomy were developed. Pisa was more advanced. Leonardo Fibonacci, son of the agent of the Pisan Republic at Bugia, on the Barbary coast, studied algebra, and intro-

duced the use of Arabic numerals. In the thirteenth century the Provençal tongue began to decline before the Italian; and a new language of music, chivalry, and love awakened the lyre of the different cities, flashes of poetry having been traceable to Farinata degli Uberti, or Fra Guittone d'Arezzo, the inventor of the sonnet.

"To the Florentine mind nought is arduous," said the goldsmith, Bernardo Cennini, who cut and set the first type for printing.

"Nobody believes longer in Christ," lamented Girolamo Benivieni, composer of pious laud and canticle.

In a later age Giordano Bruno affirmed, "The highest contemplation which transcends nature is impossible and null to him who is without belief."

Lorenzo the Magnificent, with his varied powers of intellect and classical proclivities, might skilfully poise his boat of pleasure on the brink of the cataract, but as regards the downward plunge of his subjects historians agree: "The Florentines made all tend to a life of effeminacy and idleness, trampled on the traditions of their ancestors, and, by unbounded license, were following the road to shameful vices and corruption. Their fathers, by force of work, virtues, probity, and abstinence, had raised the State, while the descendants gave themselves up to wine, gambling, and debauch." Savonarola would be prepared to ascribe to the Florentine, as Epictetus had done to the Roman orator, silver vessels of argument, but earthenware reasons, principles, and appetites.

The new-comer was well received at St. Mark's, where a reputation for holiness had preceded him. The Dominican order set a just value on preachers. The prior of St. Mark bade Savonarola preach in the Church of San Lorenzo. He made the attempt and failed. A few listeners could not restrain their weariness of inattention. The intonations were false, the style heavy, the voice

feeble of one destined to become the greatest of Lenten preachers among the Latin races. How curious the fact! How stimulating to all humble and personal effort in every walk of life is the thought of that inattentive audience of twenty-five persons, while the town flocked to the Church of Santo Spirito to hear the popular Augustinian, Fra Marianno da Gennazzano, whose graceful ease of bearing had attracted the admiration of Politian.

Apart from the severe judgment of the partisans of Savonarola, Fra Gennazzano is described as a man small of stature, with a melodious voice, and a suave manner,—one of the court preachers who steered adroitly around difficulties as worldly clergymen still do.

The prior shook his head, and despatched Savonarola to San Germignano for two seasons. Clearly he would not do for the fastidious and cultured capital. Savonarola departed in silence by the city gate, casting no shadow on the bright streets. In 1244 the bold and fiery Dominican, Peter Martyr, had emerged from Santa Maria Novella, grasping a banner and a red cross, to rout the protesting sect of the Paterini, who denied the efficacy of the Eucharist, the baptismal rite, prayer and almsgiving for the dead. The Croce al Trebbio and the Piazza of Santa Felicità were the scenes of street squabbles.

Savonarola made no such crusade. He departed as he had come, noiselessly, and in humble obedience to rule. He went to Lombardy, Padua, and Bologna. His followers have woven countless legends about him in their chronicles.

At Brescia he prophesied the visitation of fire and sword as a judgment of Heaven, in 1486, which actually befell the town two years after his own death, to the triumph of his disciples. A lady wrote him a letter foretelling the doom which awaited him. Savonarola thrust the missive into the fire, pronouncing it an emanation of the Devil.

He rebuked the violence and profanity of the band of soldiers travelling with him in the boat on the Po, and they sought his feet for conversion.

Fra Angelico de Brescia saw the head of Savonarola surrounded by a glory at Christmas time, when the latter was absorbed in a trance of ecstatic devotion, and tasted the mysticism of his faith; beholding Christ on the cross, he longed to share the sufferings of the Redeemer, and be pierced with the same nails.

Amid the tangled thread of vision and tradition, the fact exists that Savonarola was present at the provincial chapter of the order of Saint Dominic in Lombardy, held at Reggio, in 1486. Pietro de Bergamo, author of the learned table of works of Saint Thomas, and Louis of Ferrara, who was made, later, procurator, were of the conclave. Savonarola became speedily prominent for the precision of his replies and the profundity of his meditation. Such a theological light could no longer remain hidden under a bushel.

Interest in these debates drew to Reggio the famous Pico della Mirandola, one of the most beautiful figures in the wonderfully rich tapestry of Italian life of the period. Politian described him thus: "Nature appeared to have showered on this man, or rather this hero, all the gifts of body and mind. He was slender and well made, and something divine seemed to shine from his face. He was acute in perception, gifted with an excellent memory, indefatigable in study, clear and eloquent in expression. One doubted whether he shone most by his talents or his moral qualities. Versed in every branch of philosophy, favored by a perfect knowledge of several languages, he showed himself sublime and above all praise."

The young court gentleman, amiable and winning, the splendid prince, accomplished in all the acquirements of his day, and esteemed learned in Greek and Latin by

admiring contemporaries, who believed he had found the root of all faith in the Cabala, was attracted by Savonarola as the flame is drawn toward the fire. The innate virtue of Pico's soul is here revealed. He besought his friend Lorenzo to have so learned and holy a monk recalled to St. Mark, for the benefit of Florence, rather than that a superior intelligence should be lost in the obscure cloisters of Lombardy. The allegiance of the charming courtier to the stern reformer never wavered, and he was meditating assuming the monk's robe when he died.

"Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian," said this later Agrippa.

Pico della Mirandola was buried in the Church of St. Mark, in the shadow of the monastery where he would have fain dwelt in old age.

The recall of Savonarola to Florence was made by Lorenzo as an act of courtesy to his friend. Probably he had never before heard of the monk.

In July, 1489, Savonarola was at Bologna, and at Christmas again at Brescia; in January, 1490, at Pavia; in the ensuing February and March, at Genoa. His face was then turned once more to Florence. He came on foot, and his strength failed him among the pine and beech trees of the Bologna Pass, when a mysterious stranger refreshed and strengthened the pilgrim, vanishing at the city gate of San Gallo, where the Nut Fair of the Lenten Sunday is being held to-day, and the monks still receive Christ as a wayfarer, in the fresco above the door of the convent.

Savonarola quietly resumed his duties of reader and instructor of the novices. The power of the man had grown; the brotherhood of St. Mark and the city beyond were ready to listen to him. He need no longer pray to be shown the way in which to direct his soul, because the path was open before him.

It is at this point in his career that succeeding generations have ample food for speculation. What if Pico della Mirandola had not been subjected to the magnetic influence of a strange and vivid personality at Reggio, and petitioned Lorenzo the Magnificent to have Savonarola recalled to St. Mark? The monk might have been sent instead to Pavia or Brescia. At Milan he would have preached reform, but have been powerless to produce a political revolution, and his voice have died away to silence beneath the vaults of a lofty temple. His boldness and energy in denouncing a state of unexampled corruption at Rome would have speedily doomed him to the dungeons of the Castle of St. Angelo. Naples was too careless to heed his warnings. Only Florence, where "the air engendered subtle brains," would have proved susceptible to his influence. Prosaically considered, as a mortal, Savonarola might have lived in obscurity and died in his bed, but for the intervention of Pico della Mirandola. Morally weighed, as an instrument of destiny, great fame, sorrows, calumny, persecution, and the stake were ordained as his portion from the first.

His lessons to the novices brought so many hearers that he descended to the garden, and stood near the Persian rose-tree at the entrance of a small chapel. He was appointed prior, and the church became crowded to listen to his words. We are told that his first measure was to urge a withdrawal of the community to Monte Cane above the Villa Careggi, and the erection of a monastery there of roughest stone and simplest woodwork, much as Saint John Gualberto had withdrawn to Vallombrosa centuries earlier. The older brethren opposing the plan, Savonarola yielded and began to institute reforms within the existing boundaries of San Marco. His personal activity was untiring. He slept only four hours. He reflected much on death, and often kept a little ivory skull in his,

hands. Anticipating a violent end, he carried a crucifix about with him. Tenderness characterized his care of the novices. He found leisure to take them to retired spots, where, after dinner, he talked about God, the divine writings, the surrounding plants and birds. He made them dance in conformity with the joyous instincts of the age, and sing lauds. He selected the most youthful member of the band, placed him in the midst, and had him saluted as the infant Jesus by the company, with exclamations of rapturous homage. The fervid, Southern nature of Savonarola had naturally found expression in poetry, the verse embodying lamentations over the degeneracy of the Church, and decked with all the jewels of symbolism, while lacking the purity and flow of Petrarch's melody. He established a school of Oriental languages in the monastery for the study of Greek, Hebrew, Turkish, Moresco, and Chaldean, and invited lay pupils to enter.

A picturesque element would be lacking if full credence should be withheld as to Savonarola's intercourse with Lorenzo. The benefactor walked in the garden, and the new prior refused to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's by courteously welcoming him. Lorenzo, no doubt amused and puzzled by such hauteur, put money in the alms-box, and Savonarola divided the sum scrupulously, giving the gold to the good men of San Martino, and retaining the silver alone for convent use.

What a thrilling interest the visit of the traveller to the Villa Careggi would lose, deprived of the scene of Savonarola standing beside the death-bed of Lorenzo, and withholding absolution until restitution of the dowers of the robbed maidens, the sacking of Volterra, and the liberty of Florence was made, and the Medici turned his face to the wall instead! Politian states that the parting was amicable, the reconciliation complete, and Savonarola gave his blessing.

The light of history is not required to behold the Magnificent dying at Villa Careggi, with the long corridors hushed, the *loggia* deserted, the flowers fading on the garden terraces, and the sweep of hill and valley visible from the parapet, with the beautiful city in the distance. The man of the world, who had tasted of all experiences with epicurean discrimination, stricken by pain and disease, found his pleasures crumble to ashes, his cynicism empty, and asked for Savonarola.

"I know no honest friar but he." These words come down to us through the years, with the scent of the rose petals shed on the path, and the shadow of the trees of the old Medici villa still sacred to them.

An element of the Renaissance, could Lorenzo divine that his part in it would consist less in the embellishment of a small capital than as unconsciously connected with the invention of printing and the discovery of a new world?

"Le Moyen-Age a un double aspect: de naïveté et de recherche, d'ascétisme et de violence." The portraits of Lorenzo and Savonarola thus form a contrast.

The noonday had come in the career of the prior of St. Mark. From the church and garden he was transferred to the Duomo in the Lent of 1491. The term of his preaching extended over a period of eight years. At last his soul had found utterance in speech. He believed in his mission and in himself. The power of the reformer, imbued with the ire of indignation, conquered all trivial defects of manner. Original, bold, full of fire, he thrilled an impressionable audience with his own intense, consuming conviction. The renovation of the Church must be immediate. The scourging of Italy was about to come to pass. Fear, apprehension, doubt, assailed his hearers. Had we been of that company gathered in the vast Cathedral, should we not also have listened spell-bound, wondering what was about to happen to Italy and to Florence?

His words were full of life. Look, gesture, voice, became instinct with kindling passion. He yielded to all sensations himself. He wept warm tears; he laughed; he knelt at the mention of God, then swiftly rose to his feet to menace all unbelievers with clenched hand. On one occasion, in the midst of an harangue against the backslidings of the age, indignation checked his utterance, and he quitted the pulpit abruptly, thus leaving an impression more deep than words.

He depicted the mysteries of the Apocalypse. The Ark of Noah was made to float once more on the troubled waters of a second deluge, with attendant separation of clean and unclean inmates. Doom hung above the Church, the town, the land. What wonder that the multitude began to sway before the gathering storm of a religious revival?

Savonarola upbraided his audience for their luxury, covetousness, and usury. His maledictions might have blasted all Italy. He wished to cauterize the lips and tongue of the blasphemer, as Saint Louis of France had caused such offenders to be burned with hot irons. The sin of gambling had a firm hold on the commonwealth, threatening the ruin of families. His rebuke, breathing of the cloister, induces a smile even now. He dealt thus with the most devouring of passions,—that of loss and gain, “If you wish to amuse yourselves, draw a bow, play with bones, stake a salad, a vegetable.” The Signory was recommended to use torture for the worst gamblers, and servants were urged to spy upon and denounce the peccadilloes of their masters.

One who was destined to suffer death in a strange and terrible fashion mused on such dissolution: “We must die. These hands and this flesh will become dust and ashes. They are dead,—the men so young, rich, and strong, who were full of life a few hours ago. And I

also,—I shall soon die; possibly a breath may cast me out of life. What is beyond this life? Oh, man, the Devil plays at chess with you!”

The sermons may still be read, and have doubtless proved a source of inspiration to countless preachers of various creeds and nations. These sermons are bold and original in imagery, naïve and eloquent; but the living presence of the man is lacking, and they become the dried leaves of a great memory in our grasp.

The pulpit was the throne of Savonarola during that noonday of popularity. The sermons were what the orations of Demosthenes had been to Athens, and of Cicero to Rome.

The history of preaching reverted to the earliest days of the Church in Saint Gregory, Basil, and Saint John Chrysostom. Savonarola lacked the oratorical grace of a Saint Benedict, a Saint Dominic, Saint Francis d'Assisi, and that eloquent monk, Bernardino of Siena, who had given proof of his power in the Church of St. Augustine at the age of twelve years, but he emulated the Hebrew prophets, Amos, Ezekiel, Jonas.

The ardor of disciples and partisans ready to sacrifice all for him was manifested on behalf of Savonarola, the right of noble natures. A young Albizi, a Strozzi, a Ruccellai, and a Salviati entered his fold. The most characteristic element of the day is the figure of Bettuccio, son of a goldsmith, and himself a miniature painter, better known as Fra Benedetto, whose lament of Savonarola's martyrdom extends through the pages of his work, the “*Cedrus Libanus*.” The young Bettuccio had lived joyously, wore garments scented with musk, and gay ornaments, was skilled in music and poetry, and a welcome guest everywhere. Levity of mind took the form of mockery of the prior of St. Mark. Finally he went to the Duomo with an uneasy desire of escape, then fixed his

eyes on Savonarola in the pulpit, and was ever afterward unable to withdraw from that influence. Bettuccio, crushed, overwhelmed, feeling himself more dead than alive, cast away the music, cards, and perfumed dresses to enter religion.

It was thus that Savonarola fed the souls of his fellow-creatures with the bread of life in the temple still open to the traveller.

Lorenzo the Magnificent died in 1492, and the Pope Innocent VIII. in the same year. To the dismay of all Christendom Alexander VI. succeeded to the papacy. Piero de' Medici ruled after his gifted father, haughty by reason of his Orsini blood, headstrong where the old Medici citizen discretion and finesse were needful, weak and vain when firmness and decision might have saved his inheritance.

The time was critical, foreboding change and perhaps ruin. The feeble Galeazzo replaced the astute Francesco Sforza at Milan, and Pasquale Malipiero, the Doge Francesco Foscari at Venice. Rival preachers already contested the influence of the fiery zeal of Savonarola's pulpit throne. Fra Marianno Gennezzano had essayed to re-establish his former sway of polished fascination on a cultivated audience, and failed. After a courteous tilt of doctrinal debate with Savonarola, he finally withdrew to Rome, where he is accused of having influenced the Borgia against the upright and zealous reformer.

Piero de' Medici interfered with Savonarola's Lenten sermons, at the instigation of the Minorite friars. Savonarola went to Bologna, 1493, and there addressed vast throngs. The Duchess Bentivoglio, coming late to the church, with much rustle and flutter of attendants, was sternly rebuked by the preacher, which so deeply incensed the noble dame that she ordered him slain on the spot. The attendants hesitated. Savonarola, undismayed, an-

nounced from the pulpit that he would leave for Florence that evening, and sleep at Pianora, carrying only his wallet and wooden flask. "Know that my death will not occur at Bologna," he added; and his words must have inspired awe in his hearers. He departed unmolested.

It would be difficult to draw the line where a courageous sense of duty and the belief that one is appointed to accomplish a great mission may deepen to a prophetic tone. Others have felt this power later than the prior of St. Mark.

Ecclesiastical reform had often before been preached; Dante had painted the need of it. The way was now prepared by heresy and disgust of the Borgia. Savonarola fulfilled the task as a mind of his time, representing the transition between the defeat of John Huss and the triumph of Luther in other countries, while his place in his own has been ranked between Arnold of Brescia and Giordano Bruno. Instrument of a new life in the convulsions of a changing society, he could perceive that violence and agitation were better than the lethargy of death. Whither his own steps were carrying him he surely could not see, or realize the full meaning of his destiny. He buckled on his armor against unbelief and vice. There was no need of prophecy to discern the doom of Italy, with Pope Alexander VI. and Charles VIII. of France prominent. Savonarola prayed, made the Bible his constant study, and saw the visions of a monk, worn with constant vigils and fastings. He wrote the "*Compendium Revelationum*," in which he revealed confidence in his own power of prophesying. Once more he occupied the pulpit of the Duomo. His address to the Florence which he wished to renew, purify, and glorify was: "Oh, if I could say all, you would see that I am like a new vase in which the wine is hermetically sealed, and ferments without power of escape. I have in me many secrets which your incre-

dulity prevents my revealing. Oh, Florence! If thou wouldst not believe before, believe at least to-day; and if thou hast believed, believe more than ever this morning! Pay no heed to me; I am a poor monk, a poor preacher. Listen to what God has inspired in me. Follow my counsels."

Full noonday had come to Savonarola of power unlimited over the new Jerusalem he longed to remodel. The peasants flocked from the mountain villages at dawn, as they enter the town to-day to hear the Padre Agostino da Montefeltro, the Lenten preacher. The multitude swayed at his bidding in a religious revival as intense, passionate, and extreme as the recent pursuit of pleasure in the Carnival festivities, and the spectacles of the Festa of Saint John. Women cast aside their jewels, and there was fasting nearly all the year, to the indignation of the butchers. Lauds and canticles were heard in the streets. During the hour of the prior's sermon shops and schools were closed. Religious zeal sowed dissension in families; wives quitted worthy husbands to enter convents; brides and grooms partook of the sacrament instead of the wedding feast. The children were his especial care, and had seats apart in the Cathedral. He made them his emissaries in the emotional phase of burning the vanities in the Piazza Signoria, and the founding of a Monte di Pietà. Here was something more than the atonement of a year's dissipation of Catholic countries by a Lenten repentance in the Florentine mind, as when France under Louis XV. replaced Corneille and Molière with Bourdaloue and Massillon. Savonarola was called the true light. The tide of philosophy flowed in two streams from this cradle, the Florence Academy, — the Platonic spreading southward to find a culmination in Bruno, and the Aristotelian tending north to Bologna, Pavia, and Padua, urging the importance of experiment with result in Galileo. Savonarola's

hearers found in all only emptiness, a terrifying void. Saints Jerome and Ambrose banished Horace, Virgil, and Cicero. Christianity and mediævalism opposed the pagan Renaissance. Men lost themselves in the mystical contemplation of God, the saints, the Virgin. To Greek and Roman antiquity succeeded the imaginative awakening of national poetry in idealism.

Savonarola used the formula with thunder-striking effect, "Thus saith the Lord." He held above his hearers the awe-inspiring certainty that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, the conversion of all Turks and infidels imminent, the renovation of Church and State urgent.

Then ensued the period so familiar in history when he was the true ruler temporal as well as spiritual of the commonwealth. The people gave heed to his projects of reform in morals and institutions. Soderini, Francesco Valori aiding, cast the vote of the Signory for adoption in black beans, and white for rejection. Savonarola obtained the construction of the vast *Sala* to contain the Grand Council in the Palazzo Vecchio. He attained the grandeur of the noble idea of making Jesus Christ the king of the city, as when the Jews demanded a ruler of Samuel. "Take Christ for thy master, and live under his law."

The populace and the children cried, "Viva Gesù Cristo, nostro re!"

At the same time Pisa, struggling for liberty, failed to move his sympathy. The banished Medici could not regain former power. Savonarola went to Lucca with Tanai de' Nerli, Ruccellai, Capponi, and Cavalcanti, to propitiate the French king, Charles VIII., whose advent in Italy changed the face of Europe. The entrance of the king into Florence followed, and the tearing up of the treaty by the intrepid citizen, Piero Capponi, with the threat of ringing the town bells in response to French

trumpets. Alexander VI. made temporizing offers to the bold monk of the archbishopric of Florence, or a cardinal's hat. Savonarola is reputed to have replied that he desired no hat save one reddened with his own blood. From the pulpit he launched the warning: "Prepare thyself, O Rome, for great shall be thy punishment; thou shalt be hemmed in with iron, and given up to the sword, the fire, and the flame!" How his figure stands forth inspired by the immense moral courage requisite for such a defiance!

Within the cloister we have the portraits of the triumvirate formed by the prior and his two devoted followers, Fra Domenico Buonvicini and Fra Silvestro Maruffi, given by Fra Roberto Ubaldino de Gaglano: "Fra Hieronimo always bore marks of sanctity, devotion, humility, prayer, good words, pure morals, an excellent example, and admirable conversation, a doctrine healthy, firm, and solid. Fra Domenico was a man of pure life, but a narrow soul, and too much given to belief in revelations, the dreams of goodwives. I saw Fra Silvestro spend all his time in the cloister gossiping with citizens, and he had always his cell full of strangers, as well as the garden. The brethren murmured much."

Savonarola found leisure to write his great work, "The Triumph of the Cross," which opens with the picture of Christ mounted on a car with four wheels, triumphant, yet scarcely escaped from the agony of Gethsemane. On his head was a globe surrounded by rays, as emblematic of the Trinity; in his left hand he held the cross and instruments of torture, while in the right were the ancient and modern testaments. At his feet was the chalice, surmounted by the Host, and surrounded by the sacraments. A little below Christ was the Virgin, with vases of gold, silver, and crystal, containing the ashes of the dead confided to her care. Apostles and preachers dragged the

chariot. Patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament walked before, and a crowd of all conditions followed.

This cumbersome machinery of allegory reminds one of Northern imagery in art, the carvings of German churches, and Dutch chimney-pieces. Did Savonarola receive some wave of influence from the Low Countries, or was Holland still more indebted to Italy?

Religious excitement was wrought to the highest pitch; the pure exaltation of the leader became frenzy and folly in his disciples. He was supposed to possess miraculous gifts: he had driven forth all evil spirits from the convent; he could call down fire from heaven; he could raise the dead to life once more. The younger Pico della Mirandola eagerly demanded that his famous uncle should receive such resurrection.

The sun of popular favor had set; and the night of terror, confusion, and suffering was at hand. Savonarola preached in the Duomo and was insulted, the pulpit defiled, the sermon interrupted, and he withdrew by the Street of the Watermelon, protected by the Piagnoni. His moderation and dignity of bearing suffered no comment on the incident, while he continued to expound the text on returning to the convent. He was excommunicated by the Pope. He had appealed to the Emperor Maximilian, to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, to Ludovico the Moor, to intervene in Italian politics; and the letter to the latter had been intercepted. The Medici power was again in the ascendant.

From a worldly standpoint the wane of power did not need the machinations of the Pope or the Medici. Reaction from asceticism was natural; the hissing serpent of evil raised its head, — the gamblers and astrologers, long crushed by the anathemas of the preacher, and the youth forming the Compagnacci, who longed for the wedding feasts and former revelry, and made lampoons circulate about the streets, satirizing the Piagnoni as weepers and

hypocrites; the rival orders, who stigmatized Savonarola as a sower of discord in the midst, with such a conservative element in the background as the husbands and the indignant butchers. He withdrew to St. Mark, where his disciples still esteemed him as a saint or a magician. The curious ordeal of passing through fire and the ultimate failure of the test followed.

The decree of banishment from Florence was succeeded by the attack of the Arrabbiati and the Compagnacci on the monastery, with the clamor, "To arms! to arms! San Marco!"

Darkness of night! The mob cursed and howled; the monks within strove to chant. Valori, summoned before the Signory, was slain in the street by his enemies, the Ridolfi and the Tornabuoni. We see Savonarola, clad in his sacerdotal robes and carrying the relics in procession through the cloisters and corridors, followed by his flock, the groans of the wounded mingling with the tumult, until the order came for the prior to give himself up to the law. We hear Fra Malatesta Sacromoro murmur that the shepherd should save the sheep. Then Savonarola went forth into the square, with his arms tied behind his back, to be protected by the spears of the soldiery in helmet and cuirass from the seething multitude, while reviled with coarsest brutality of abuse, and his delicate hands wrenched and twisted by his adversaries.

Darkness of night! Torture in the old Bargello, watched over by devils rather than men in his anguish, the poor right arm left uninjured by the rack in order to sign refutation of errors, the notary, Ser Ceccone, alert to receive all depositions, then the cell far up in the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, while the Signory wrangled over his fate, and the pyre was being made ready in the square below! In the spirit of the age he was accused, like Peter, of denying his Lord. Surely his disciples may be

pardoned if in turn they compared his pilgrimage to that of Christ to Calvary. He wrote his meditations on the Miserere high up yonder in the tower, with the uninjured right hand: "Sorrow has pitched his camp around me, and has encompassed me with a strong and numerous army; he has taken full possession of my heart, and never ceases, night or day, to attack me with clang of arms."

Above the sound of chains rose the voices of angels. If ever he had visions, it must have been at that supreme moment, when he was capable of saying with Ignatius and Polycarp, "The greater the pain, the greater the gain." Did he more than ever realize that Christ's birth into this sinful world was his true death, his veritable crucifixion, and his death only a return to everlasting glory? So shall the last day be the first of perpetual repose. May he not already have beheld, with spiritualized vision, the Priest Most High walking amid the golden lamps of the new Jerusalem?

On learning of the sentence of death, Fra Domenico prepared to share the martyrdom of Savonarola with enthusiasm, and Fra Silvestro with agitation.

May 23, 1498, in the forty-sixth year of his age, after partaking of the sacrament in the beautiful little chapel of San Bernardo, Savonarola descended to the vale of shadow, the square, the humiliation of being disrobed, the gibes of the multitude, and the very children who may have once belonged to his choirs.

"I separate you from the Church militant and triumphant," was the fiat of the Pope's emissary.

"From the Church militant, but from the Church triumphant, it is not in your power to do," was the memorable reply.

Let us draw the veil over the cruel, often-described scene. The flames speedily leaped up about the inanimate body, for "Savonarola's soul went out in fire."

CHAPTER VII.

THOSE WHO CAME AFTER.

IT is midnight in the Via Cocomero. Heavy masses of cloud obscure the sky, as if about to dissolve in rain; and the atmosphere is dull, lifeless, stagnant, with that element of suspense in immobility, suggestive of one of the eight winds reputed to sweep the Arno capital, awakening to fresh activity, bringing the keenness of snow from the Apennines, or the languid warmth of a sea current from the south.

The narrow street is silent, save for the echo of a passing footstep or the rumble of an occasional vehicle. The Niccolini Theatre is mute; arched doorways form blotting shadows where mediæval assassins might lurk. At one end of the thoroughfare the vast pile of the Duomo is enveloped in obscurity; in the opposite direction, the low wall of the monastery of St. Mark is faintly defined.

The Shrine of the Five Lamps gains at the moment its deepest significance in the span of day. Shadows throng about it at this weird hour. Revery, the merest idle musing, acquires a definite interest in the presence of this phantom company. The street, the city, the air, are full of the ghosts of a great past. The strife of rival factions is noiseless and bloodless; and the clash of arms has become the faintest echo of the wind. If partisans rush from the Duomo into the Street of the Watermelon to equip themselves with weapons in the houses of the Cambi, or the throng of women, unable to hear the prior in the crowd,

retreat to the Church of San Niccolò, they brush the shrine with their impalpable garments. The contest of warm human passions was hushed so long ago.

Savonarola, an austere shade, guarded by the phalanx of the Piagnoni, traversed the street, coming from the Duomo, where he had been insulted by his enemies, as he preached there for the last time. Ingratitude, raillery, hissing hatred, and the menace of temporal power form the bitter dregs of the cup already held to his lips.

And those who came after ?

When the martyrdom of the Piazza Signoria had been accomplished, and noble ladies, disguised as servants, had pressed forward to collect relics of the dead from the funeral pyre, before the ashes were cast into the Arno from the Ponte Vecchio, such darkness as that of the present hour settled on the faithful followers of Savonarola. Consternation at the humiliation of his end, when some miraculous intervention for a prophet was awaited in expectant awe, added a poignancy to the fear induced by persecution. Gloom, depression, and weakness were manifested by the flocks robbed of their shepherd. They knew not which way to turn. Abuse, mockery, violence in every form, fell to the lot of the hapless Piagnoni, who had believed in Savonarola. Many fled from intolerable contumely; others endured in silence; still more bowed to the passing storm. That wail of the abandoned Savonaroliani inscribed in Fra Benedetto's "*Cedrus Libanus*" seems to linger on the ear:—

*“ La carità è spenta,
Amor di Dio non ci è.
Tepido ognuni diventa,
Non ci è più viva fe.”*

The monastery of St. Mark was closed for two years, although the monks had made timid, even abject, overtures for forgiveness to the Pope. The treasures of the



monastic library were scattered, and the bell of the church tower, called *La Piagnora*, taken down, because tolled on the day of the tumult, and whipped through the town by the common hangman.

The faction of the *Arrabbiati* fumigated with brimstone the churches where the influence of Savonarola had been felt. The climax of public obloquy of all hypocrites and weepers was attained by leading a wretched ass to the customary place of Savonarola in the *Duomo* at Christmas, and then goading the animal around the interior of the sacred edifice until it fell dead. This act of revolting brutality was instigated by *Tanai de' Nerli*.

How vivid, if oblique, the glimpse of personal hatred to the preacher, finding vent in a frenzied beating of a poor ass in a church! yet *Tanai de' Nerli* was a notable citizen, intrusted with foreign embassies in the interests of the commonwealth. He appears in the odor of sanctity in an altar picture of the Church of *Santo Spirito*, as pious parent and edifying husband, while Saint Catherine presents his wife to the Virgin.

Such was the point of view of *Tanai de' Nerli*, to whom Savonarola was an active enemy, a sower of discord in the household, a disturber of public peace.

Luther declared Savonarola his champion; but the tenets of Luther were not accepted by Florence, especially by the monks of *St. Mark* and the *Piagnoni*, who affirmed that their leader desired not apostasy from the Church, but its purification.

The vital spark of faith was not quenched. On the 23d of May garlands of flowers were placed on the spot where the stake had been erected for many years, in defiance of all police regulations. Passionate attachment to the memory of Savonarola acquired manifold phases of the worship of relics, and the performance of miracles of healing. The younger *Pico della Mirandola* recovered

from the Arno a grewsome treasure which he was pleased to consider the heart of Savonarola, and as such, the object of veneration healed countless sick persons. Superstition and fantasy went hand in hand with the true reverence experienced in traversing the wide *piazza* at the present hour and contemplating the Palazzo Vecchio. His portrait, with a halo surrounding the head, is said to have been exposed for sale at Rome after death. Thirty years later the Piagnoni, as a faction, wielded political power in Florence, thus confirming his influence on a new generation.

The German reformer is not one of the phantoms hovering near the Shrine of the Five Lamps at midnight, but the wraith of the nun, Catherine di Pier Francesco Ricci, passes on noiseless feet. This noble lady, who was an inmate of the convent of San Vincenzo, at Prato, having been ill with fever for two years, in 1540, vowed to Fra Girolamo and his companions that if she were cured in three days she would sing three Masses in their honor on the anniversary of their martyrdom, and keep the day for three years. Thereupon the three Dominicans appeared to her in a dream, and Savonarola made the sign of the cross. She awoke cured, and composed many songs of thanksgiving for her recovery as narrated by devout monks. Was it owing to the fervor of her subsequent zeal, or the eloquence of the lauds she sang, that the Suor Caterina de' Ricci was canonized as a saint?

War and other misfortunes swept over the land and the Florentine commonwealth, thus fulfilling the sagacious predictions of Savonarola. Cesare Borgia, scheming to found a State in the Romagna, would fain devour Italy, like an artichoke, leaf by leaf. Time failed him, and he was obliged to leave the tempting morsel to France and Austria.

Said Lord Bacon: "The history of times representeth the magnitude of actions; but lives, propounding to them-

selves a person to represent, in whom actions, both greater and smaller, public and private, have a comixture, contain a more true, lively, and native representation."

The artists claim our interest, separating themselves naturally from the ranks of mere party, and more or less visionary worshippers. Even in the obscurity the group forms before our eyes. Savonarola is the central figure, surrounded by notable men. Each carries a separate atmosphere about him. Savonarola was the tree with vigorous roots in the earth, and these followers the branches, the leaves, and the fruit. Savonarola was the star, and these the rays reflected in troubled waters. From this spot the three sister shapes — Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting — went forth to beautify the world. If we search for the work of several of these great men in Florence, we may discover some peculiar significance of Savonarola's power of moral influence in the moulding of clay, the fusing of bronze, the mingling of colors, the shaping of marble to altar and temple. He showed these that life is not idle ore, but metal to be bent to noble ends. By their fruits, the work left behind, we know them. There is a profound interest to most of us in knowing what other souls, groping amid sin, crime, and doubt after the light, have felt and believed. So down to our time we experience a sympathy, an emotion beyond ourselves in tracing this chain of being, each link separate yet connected with the rest, and all subject to the universal law of growth and decay, life and death. "Pray not for crutches, but for wings," says an American divine. What manner of men were those to whom Savonarola promised wings instead of crutches? One cannot read an entire guidebook, however conscientious, without bewilderment. The individualities of a few artists, influenced by Savonarola, gather around the Shrine of the Five Lamps.

Michelangelo, a thrilled listener of the prior of St. Mark

in his youth, read the sermons in his old age. The brothers Della Robbia, made priests by Savonarola, modelled medals bearing his likeness on one side, and a city with towers on the reverse. Girolamo Benivieni, Florentine gentleman and poet, inseparably associated with art, ventured to address the Pope Clement VII., after the siege of his native town, in terms that might have emanated from the leader long dead. Baccio della Porta became the monk Fra Bartolommeo of St. Mark; Sandro Botticelli gave up painting, and would have starved but for aid from the Medici; Lorenzo di Credi passed the last years of his life in the monastery of Santa Maria Novella; maddened by persecution, Baccio da Montelupo fled to Bologna, Venice, and Lucca; Cronaca ceased telling stories; Giovanni della Corniuole perpetuated the peculiar physiognomy of the Frate on his finest gem. In the background of the picture one may fancy Francesco della Tadda, whose chisel was tempered to cut porphyry under Cosimo I. The self-absorption, or egotism, which enabled artists to pursue their work in turbulent times, oblivious of siege and battle, failed in the trial of Savonarola's death. The strong arm drooped unnerved, the fervid imagination was robbed of aliment for a space at least, the sacred flame of an extraordinary personality being withdrawn.

These are still the shapes that haunt the Shrine of the Five Lamps at midnight. Noble in thought and aim, the old adage might have applied to them, that if the heart of a Florentine citizen were cut open, in it would be found a lily of gold. They wrought to beautify, their labor emanating from the soul, and carrying in the brain the thrilling words once uttered by the monk of St. Mark.

Thus darkness deepens before dawn, and far above the roofs of the sleeping town rises the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, called La Barberia. The slender, graceful shaft,

unique in architecture, is dedicated to Christ, and under the protection of Saint Barbara, as the patroness of towers and protectress against storms. The bell of the old cow, La Vacca, is mute. In 1814 the cell, hollowed out of the thickness of the wall, with the window and stone bench intact, where Savonarola and Cosimo the Elder were each confined in turn, was rediscovered. The latter, as a sagacious politician, schemed to recover hereditary right of rule over the town outspread below, his gold coin already in circulation among the crowd. The former, crushed by the rack, dreamed of heaven and raising his fellow-creatures to the same heights. The old tower still soars above the roofs, untouched and unharmed, seemingly immutable amid change. No clouds of incense rise about the street tabernacle, and no prayers are repeated by devout citizens; but the lamps are each symbolical of a prayer, yearning heavenward in the night. The ray of Abram's dream or of Job's musings are recalled by the antique shape of the receptacle, and massive chains. The blended significance of religious use in temples, of household banquets and wedding feasts, of the chill sepulchre, may all be derived from the old shrine, for birth, marriage, and death have been perpetually recurring in the narrow way.

The first lamp glows resplendent in the obscurity, becomes transfigured by association, swaying on links of frosted silver, with a golden chalice and precious incrustations, and sheds abroad a wide effulgence of imperishable glory. That lamp burns to the memory of Michelangelo.

How slender and feeble in comparison is the ray beyond, and yet clear, unwavering, steadfast, after its own fashion. The cup is bronze, quaintly turned, and of classical design, and might, fed with perfumed oil, find a fitting place in a nook of some vast *sala* of a Florentine palace, placed

beside old books, precious folios, and parchments. The second lamp surely belongs to Girolamo Benivieni.

The life flame of the Della Robbia, Fra Bartolommeo, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, glow with a rich and holy lustre in the wrought-brass church lamp farther on, always trimmed to reveal altar picture and fading chapel fresco.

The wayward spark of Baccio da Montelupo and Cronaca tremble on the night air; and still more remote, the oblique gleam of Francesco della Tadda seems to flicker in a three-beaked *lucerna* of the Tuscan kitchen.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE CHURCH OF THE LILY.

THE Street of the Watermelon has one of the most magnificent of gateways in the Cathedral at the end of the thoroughfare. Approaching this limit, the opposite door and porch of the church, with the columns supported by the two lions, is the identical portal of which a hapless citizen, a dweller in our Via del Cocomero centuries ago, dreamed one night. The citizen fancied himself bitten by the lions, — the emblematic animal, guardian of the sanctuary, according to the Lombardic creed of belief, — and wishing to disabuse his mind of the painful impression, went the next morning and thrust his hand into the marble jaws, when a lurking scorpion stung him, and he died.

We, unstung of scorpions, did not enter by the lion-guarded porch on a memorable occasion. The morning was radiant with sunshine in a period of fitful weather, sudden rain-gusts, varied by keen-edged winds, calculated to nip the circulation of royal personages. The world was out of tune, the spring tardy in England and France, while in Italy wise old people croaked that the moon was a month behind time, as the goddess had been for the past year, with results detrimental to the earth. In the span of sunshine Florence appeared fresh, dazzling; music resounded, and silk banners of wondrous design, devices of dragon, serpent, or crescent, floated from the palace windows of the Street of the Watermelon. A bouquet of flowers bloomed in a china vase on the ledge of the Taber-

nacle of the Five Lamps. Did sober Andrea Tafi, preparing his mosaic cubes, and grinding colors in the dawn of winter mornings, to the discomfiture of his sleepy pupil, Buffalmacco, foresee the fulfilment of this day? Giotto must have divined it, with clearest vision of the architect and artist.

We did not enter the portal of the lions opposite our street, but turning to the left in the *piazza* skirted the church in all its majestic proportions.

Something unusual, long anticipated, was astir in the very air. The mediæval buildings were decked with banners, tapestries, escutcheons, each replete with some historical meaning, if one paused to decipher motto and coat-of-arms. Masses of roses clung in tender loveliness to the rough masonry, cast across arched doorway, balcony, and the embrasure of casements. In the Flower City this old square was wreathed with roses in honor of the Duomo Our Lady of the Flowers. Beyond the Via dei Servi the blooming sprays made space for a bust of Donatello, in a freshly gilded niche on an ancient house surrounded by the laurel wreaths of the master's centenary. Farther on, the Opera del Duomo poured a wealth of blossoms from cornucopias across the façade, as if to designate the teeming abundance of design still treasured within the walls. Arnolfo and Brunelleschi looked on. How superbly the church dominated these fading wreaths with which the border of her garments was decked in honor of completion!

Follow with the eye the line of foundation in that vast expanse of pavement, the square. Sept. 8, on the Nativity of the Virgin, 1298, the Cardinal Pietro Valeriani, the first papal legate sent to Florence, laid the corner-stone. Arnolfo di Cambio was ordered to build a cathedral by the town: "Since the highest mark of prudence in a people of noble origin is to proceed in the management of

their affairs so that their magnanimity and wisdom may be evinced in their outward acts, we order Arnolfo, headmaster of our commune, to make a design for the renovation of Santa Reparata in a style of magnificence which neither the industry nor power of man can surpass." Such were the terms of the command. Santa Reparata, rudely built in 407, after the model of a basilica, and to commemorate a victory of the Florentines over the Goths, disappeared before Arnolfo's new edifice, to which he gave stability by ingenious geometrical combinations, worked out in the entire structure. Subterranean wells were dug around the foundations, for the escape of elastic gases, and to obviate the danger of earthquakes.

Follow with the eye the upspringing of the walls, in obedience to the will of one mind, capable of projecting at the same time the Church of Santa Croce and the Palazzo Vecchio, and aided by an enlightened commonwealth. Marbles of Carrara, Siena, Prato, Lavenza, or Monterantoli, all incrusting in symmetrical patterns, set in panels with vertical and horizontal bands, make the surface where the light and shadow of the passing hours, the storms and sunshine of the passing centuries, play with the rich effect characteristic of Italian architecture. To meet the expenses of erection the Guild of Wool merchants gave large sums out of their own funds, and obtained a decree of a tax of four denari in a lira on all goods exported, and two soldi a year on every member of the population.

Follow with the eye roof, cornice, and dome, rising above apse and transept against the blue sky, from the corner of the Via de' Balestriere, at the southeast angle, and consider for a moment how Brunelleschi fused his life into that supreme achievement impossible to the grasp of duller, feebler intellects, the outer and inner shell forming slowly during a period of fourteen years, a work-

man swept off occasionally like an insect rendered giddy by too much sunshine, although the wine was watered up there, and the regimen sober. The keynote of the solution of roofing in the sanctuary was thus obtained, after endless debate and good-will had suggested such expedients as filling the entire edifice to the brim with earth to gain a point of support for the requisite work. If the hint were judiciously circulated through street and market-place that silver coin had been mingled with the soil, would not many hands aid in the subsequent removal of the mass, as the sailors and navvies still help in building a sanctuary to the Madonna on the hill above some Mediterranean seaport? Many more years must elapse before the restoration of the lantern, which, struck by lightning, was replaced later by the work of Verrocchio.

There is the outer gallery visible from this point, the narrow passage supplemented by Baccio d'Agnolo, wholly in opposition to the immense corbels of Brunelleschi, a fretting zeal checked by the timely sarcasm of Michelangelo, that it resembled one of the tiny wicker cages in which countless generations of Florentine children have captured the mole-cricket in the meadows on Ascension Day.

Contemplating the magnificent building, the remembrance of the parody on the projects of the guilds will recur to the mind in the ceremonials of the Club of the Trowel, held on the *aja* or threshing-floor of Santa Maria Nuova, in 1512, where the bronze gates of the Baptistery had been cast.

The members, divided into architects and operatives, were shown the design of an edifice, the former furnished with trowels, and the latter to act as humble laborers in the work of construction. Pails of *ricotta*, goats' milk cheese, served for mortar, sugar-plums for gravel, grated Parmesan as sand, cakes and pastry formed the bricks,

while meats afforded the foundations, and fowls and sausages the columns.

Quitting the angle of the Via Proconsolo, the roses looped their sprays of living bloom along the other side of the square, where orange-trees flanked the porticos. The most beautiful decoration of the entire *piazza*, in characteristic suggestiveness, was that of the noble brotherhood of the Misericordia. Shields, flowers, golden fruit for balcony and embrasure of other palaces, but for the Misericordia wreaths of amaranth, sheaves of palm, violet clusters.

Giotto's Campanile shone with rosy reflections in the pure light. Opposite is the Bigallo, and in the rear, behind the Baptistery, the residence of the archbishop, once dwelt in by the famous Countess Mathilda, bore on the surface curious mediæval escutcheons.

A sea of human life surged about the spot, composed of citizens, mountaineers from the distant heights, come over night to witness the spectacle, as they flocked to hear Savonarola preach centuries ago, and peasants from the adjacent Val d'Arno. These elements formed a solid phalanx of resistance to the mounted guards; having gained the spot, they would not yield an inch until they had tasted to the full the Italian intoxication of delight in crowds, movement, and tumult of spectacular excitement. In the midst a shimmer of gold and velvet, fringed with white marguerites, indicated the royal pavilion, surrounded by gleaming uniforms and fluttering plumes.

The queen touched an electric button, and the curtain concealing the façade descended, revealing the fact that the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore was at length completed. Then the central door opened, and the archbishop emerged, attired in his richest robes, and followed by the chapter chanting. The prelate blessed the sacred edifice, and extended to the sovereigns the papal benediction.

The pageant was effective, with such an incomparable setting; but possibly we behold it all too near at hand to realize the future historical significance of this meeting of Church and State, just as the façade, garish and highly ornate in freshness, may require the medium of softening summer twilight or moonlight, to best appreciate the Madonna of Sarrocchi, the *basso-rilievo* of Passaglia, the lunettes and mosaics of Barabino, or the delicate work in marble of Canapino.

The least observant spectator must discern the keynote of the emotion of the hour. The finest modern type of king, in energetic effort and generous sympathy with his subjects, the priest, the architect, the sculptors, and the stone-cutters, Tuscan *scalpellini* from the districts where Benedetto da Majano and the Rovezzani once worked, meet here before the finished façade in a fraternity of mutual recognition. These men are Italians and brothers from King Humbert, wearing the order of the Annunziata, to the marble-cutter of Settignano in his holiday coat, triumphant and independent, who points out the trace of his own chisel on pilaster or niche to his womenkind, sun-bronzed and bareheaded, shrivelled grandmother, buxom wife, and laughing girls.

The scene might warm the very dust of Arnolfo del Cambio, who designed the first façade, and of Giotto, who raised the ornamentation to one third of the requisite height with columns, statues, and niches, only to be sacrificed two centuries later when pulled down by Buontalenti, the engineer of the Grand-duke Francesco, even of Andrea del Sarto, who painted the surface of rubble and cement in *chiaroscuro* for a passing ceremonial.

Surely some subtle link of fellowship must exist between the Guild of Wool and the citizens taxed two soldi in their tombs, and the Russian, the Frenchman, the American, Englishman, and German, who have given of their

fortune to complete the fulfilment of to-day. The town gibe of centuries must henceforth pass into oblivion: "Your affair will be settled when the works of Santa Maria are completed."

The Florentine is unchanged. A few years ago the entire population discussed the façade, as to the desirability of a pointed or square finish of the top, with the same interest in art which led their ancestors to carry Cimabue's Madonna in procession through the streets, from the studio in the Borgo Allegro to the Church of Santa Maria Novella, to criticise Donatello's latest work, to admire the bronze doors of the Baptistery. Should the apex of the façade be cuspidal or bicuspidal in form? The question was on every lip, with energy of dispute waxing hot on occasion, and leading to the tossing of the contents of a wine-glass in the face of a vehement adversary in the neighboring cafés.

The curtain has fallen; the ceremony is terminated; the royal *cortège* moves away; and martial music fills the air. A soft cloud of carrier-pigeons wing their flight to the most distant provinces of the kingdom to announce the event.

In the calends of May, month of love and roses, Florence and Venice have once more been fair rivals, with exhibitions, illuminations, and throngs of visitors. As in the Middle Ages the Arno city has cast down her defiance of the lovely siren of the Adriatic shore in fashion similar to the reply of Benedetto Dei to Niccolò Ardinghelli: "Florence is more beautiful, and five hundred and forty years older than your Venice. We spring from a triply noble blood. We are one third Roman, one third Frankish, and one third Fiesolan. Compare with this, I pray you, the elements of which you are composed. First of all, you are Slavonian; secondly, Paduans of Antenor's dirty traitor brood; thirdly, fisher-folk from Malamocco and

Chioggia. We hold by the Gospel of Saint John, you by that of Saint Mark, in which there is as much difference as between fine French wool and that with which mattresses are stuffed. We have round about us thirty thousand estates owned by noblemen and merchants, citizens and craftsmen, yielding us yearly bread and meat, wine and oil, vegetables and cheese, hay and wood, to the value of nine hundred thousand ducats, as you Venetians, Genoese, Rhodians, and Chians, who come to buy, very well know. We have two trades greater than four of yours in Venice put together, — wool and silk. Witness the Roman court, that of the King of Naples, the Marches and Sicily, Constantinople and Pera, Broussa and Adrianople, Salonica and Gallipolis, Chios and Rhodes, where, to your envy and disgust, there are Florentine consuls and merchants, banks and offices, whither go more Florentine wares of all kinds, especially silken stuffs, and gold and silver brocades, than from Venice, Genoa, and Lucca. Ask your merchants who visit Marseilles, Avignon, Lyons, Provence, Bruges, Antwerp, or London, whether they have seen the banks of the Medici, the Pazzi, Capponi, the Corsini, the Portinari, and a hundred others which I name not because I should require a ream of paper."

The Venetian is pronounced so spiteful that he might readily be mistaken for a Sienese in his allusion to Cosimo de' Medici as being unable to take his bonds and coin into another world.

"To-day I receive the ashes of Rossini in the temple of Santa Croce, celebrate the centenary of Donatello, wreath the vast *piazza* with roses in honor of the completion of the Duomo," adds Florence in the noontide of the 15th of May, 1887.

"To-day I erect a statue to Victor Emanuel, and open an artistic exhibition," retorts Venice. "The amiable queen has baptized the latest ship 'Galileo,' launched

from my arsenal. The strains of Verdi's 'Othello' awaken the echoes of my canals and limpid lagoons."

"The amiable queen unveils my cathedral façade," Florence rejoins.

Then Venice murmurs low, "She came to me in affliction, and visited my cholera-smitten islands, reviving drooping courage by her presence."

Florence is mute for a moment, then answers, "Margherita of Savoy would do as much for me in sorrow."

Venice and Florence, shrines of fresh artistic homage in the Italian springtime, are connected together by the presence of a great lady. She embodies herself a part of this springtime, whether enveloped in lace of Burano, or decked with pearls for Santa Maria del Fiore.

In the Church of the Lily a Te Deum had been celebrated, with the unwonted gleam of thousands of wax tapers in crystal chandeliers. The ceremony over, the interior once more assumed a familiar aspect of silence and darkness, impressive in the very absence of ornamentation. Accepting the edifice in the significance of Lombard architecture, the three doors should signify the Trinity, the catherine-wheel window the unity of Christ as the light of the Church, the crypt the moral death of man, with the cross as atonement, and the cupola as heaven.

The church is a Latin cross, with a great nave, two smaller side aisles, two transepts, and two tribunes out of which open five chapels, with the dome above. Shadowy inscriptions on the walls record the foundation of the cathedral, the transfer of the ashes of Saint Zenobius to the spot, the half-effaced epitaphs of the patrons of the work. The tombs of Giotto, Marsilio Ficino, Brunelleschi, Pier Farnese, captain of the Free Companies, smitten by plague in 1363, or of valiant Bishop Antonio d'Orso, who led forth the canons in full armor against Henry

VII., when Florence was besieged, may still be discovered. The Te Deum of the day failed to stir the dust of Antonio Squarcialupo, "Antonio of the organs," whose instruments were the delight of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and long made the voice of such temples. His best two organs were burned in St. Paul's Church of London, while he went to Constantinople to build another worthy of Mahomet II.

The curious monument of the Englishman, Sir John Hawkwood, is beside the entrance door, — the equestrian figure painted by Paolo Uccellò, — to imitate sculpture, with gray tints upon gray to produce the requisite effect. Such is the last resting-place of the reputed Essex tailor who exchanged the needle for the sword, and the thimble for the shield of a soldier of fortune, with such notable result as a funeral given by grateful Florence, the bier covered with red velvet and cloth-of-gold, and borne by knights with torches, banners, shields, and war horses clothed in sumptuous trappings. Opposite is the companion work, the tomb of Niccolò Tolentino, by Andrea del Castagno.

Above the first door of the north aisle is the funeral urn of Don Pedro, father of the ill-fated Eleanora of Toledo, who died of supping too generously on snipe, or of remonstrating with his terrible son-in-law, Cosimo I., on his conjugal cruelties. Beyond the fresco of Dante expounding the "Divina Commedia," by Domenico di Michelini, the pupil of Fra Angelico gleams faintly in the dusk.

A *baldacchino* of silver cloth floats over the main altar, where is placed the crucifix of Benedetto da Majano. The marbles of that enclosing balustrade, executed by jealous Bandinelli and his eighty-eight pupils, reveals here and there rich colors, like the veining of agate on the sibyls, prophets, and evangelists grouped in profuse design. In the rear of the high altar rises the unfinished group of

statuary which was the last work of Michelangelo's long life. Nicodemus and the Magdalene support the body of the Saviour, sinking in death, with placid features and head crowned with thorns. Wrought from a column belonging to the Temple of Peace and gift of Pope Paul III., this entombment, on which a soft obscurity broods, even as incompleteness veils the half-defined forms, is the treasure of the church, for the mighty genius that fashioned it dwarfs all effort of other artists. In the sorrowful greatness of old age the man who was only contented when he held a chisel in his hand, and could imagine no phase of power or beauty not imprisoned in a block of marble, came at midnight, attached a candle to his pasteboard cap, and worked on this group in his Roman studio, until the flaw was discovered which made him desist.

Vasari was sent by the Pope, on the pretext of obtaining some sheets of drawings, to catch a glimpse of the Christ; and Michelangelo, having despatched his servant, Urbino, to find the designs, dropped the lantern in order that the curiosity of the visitor should remain ungratified.

"I am so old that death often pulls me by the coat to come with him, and some day I shall fall down like this lantern, and my last spark of life will be extinguished." This plaint of feebleness and infirmity reaches us still, pausing here before the work, the face of Joseph of Arimathea gazing down upon us gravely from his hooded mantle, the body of Christ already limp in insensibility, the agony of the followers none the less eloquent because half portrayed.

The place is sacred to the art of this great soul. The ceremony of the day passes; the tapers burn dim; the music of the *Te Deum* dies away to silence beneath the roof. The Church of the Lily, by virtue of this unfinished group, belongs to the memory of Michelangelo.

Above the entombment rises the cupola decorated by

Vasari, who partook of the sacrament before mounting the scaffolding for the perilous labor, completed by Federigo Zuccherò. Lacking in richness of color and design, the frescos still span that giddy height, pallid and ineffective, the target for the sarcasms of the poet Lasca:

“Georgin, Georgin, you ought to be accused;

Georgin committed the sin.

Presumptuously he was the first

To paint the cupola;

And the Florentine people

Will never cease to mourn

Until perhaps some day it may be covered with whitewash.”

Facing the entombment is the apse with the bronze and silver *cassa* beneath the altar, wrought by Ghiberti, as the history of Saint Zenobius, and containing the relics of the holy man. To each artist his especial gift. For Ghiberti the most exquisite modelling of the goldsmith in metals, with pictorial perspective, as in the shrine of Saint Zenobius, and the bronze doors of the opposite Baptistery, a keen refinement of taste, exulting in the discovery of antique busts and statues, such as the Hermes, dug up in the Vigna San Celso, and capable of discerning the beauty of classical relics by the touch of the fingers; for Brunelleschi, the soaring dome, when the hampering rivalry of Ghiberti left him free to act alone. How significant the difference! The dome still rises intact and majestic above the *cassa* of the goldsmith containing the saint's bones, in the cathedral apse.

The lunettes of Luca della Robbia's Resurrection and Ascension above the doors of the two sacristies resemble cameos in delicacy of outline and coloring.

On the right hand of the entombment the painted windows of the south transept shed a rich glow on pavement and frescoed chapel. On the left the north transept treasures the choral books of Vanti degli Attavanti and Monte

di Giovanni, with traces of the disk of the marble slabs in the centre of the pavement of Paolo Toscanelli's gnomon, made in 1468 for the sun's rays to fall through the lantern on the 29th of June, the period of the summer solstice. Toscanelli was the correspondent of Columbus.

In the Church of the Lily the visitor may muse for hours on the events which have taken place within these walls, so barren of gilded ornamentation, and so rich in memory of stirring events. Startled groups of partisans and enemies may rush across the nave, with sudden clash of sword and dagger, as when the young Lorenzo de' Medici was rescued from assassins by his followers, and hurried through this very sacristy door, while his brother Giuliano fell. Frederick III. of Germany, seated in state, distributed here the honors of knighthood. Charles VIII. of France was received beneath this dome by Florence.

The mind, guided by the eye, swiftly reverts to the group of Christ. Here is the temple, the shrine, the tomb of Michelangelo. Sorrow, power, grandeur of conception even in labors half defined, — we have all the elements of soul in the incomplete mass yonder, breathed upon by genius, and left. On the horizon Rome, with St. Peter's dominating all like a sunset cloud, may be emblematic of his fame; but in no other spot, not even excepting Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, the house in the Via Ghibellina, does his majestic personality acquire the eloquent, pathetic reality discoverable at the base of this group, his last work. In no other spot do the scenes of his life recur more vividly, or the thread of his familiar story run more smoothly than in the twilight of the Duomo. Greatest of the followers of Savonarola, inasmuch as the power of the reformer's words penetrated his soul, he naturally takes the first rank as honoring the memory of the monk of St. Mark's.

We see the Tiber valley with the chestnut woods sloping up to the beech forests of the Apennines, cradle of the stream; while below, the vines sway from tree to tree, the corn ripens to gold on the stalk, the gray oxen draw the plough through the furrows, and the children tend the flocks of sheep and swine by the wayside. On the heights rise the little towns, rich in history,—Borgo San Sepolcro, built by crusaders from Jerusalem, or the war-battered rock of Città di Castello, and Caprese, approached so long ago by the Florentine Ludovico Buonarrotti, newly appointed *podestà*, accompanied by his young wife, Francesca del Sera, on horseback. The steed stumbled on the rough path, slipped, and fell, dragging the rider, yet the child known to the world as Michelangelo was born unharmed.

We see the boy put out at nurse with the wife of a stonemason of Settignano, on the hillside of the Arno, according to a system incomprehensible to the nurseries of many lands, and imbibing from the breast of this vigorous foster-mother an instinctive longing to wield the chisel, as he playfully affirmed in later years.

Youth asserted the right to try new wings. Ludovico Buonarrotti, with paternal solicitude, would fain choose the career of this strong eaglet fledged in the nest of a commonplace brood. Did not a similar mature wisdom intend Guido to be a musician, Guercino a mason, Salvatore Rosa a priest, Claude Lorraine a *pâtissier*, or Molière a dealer in old clothes? Michelangelo was destined to become a scholar, and his brothers merchants. Behold, he had known how to draw ever since he could use his hands, and sought the studio of Domenico Ghirlandajo, with his friend, Granaccio, as naturally and spontaneously as the flowers expand to the sun. In the choir of the Church of Santa Maria Novella he was permitted to take those first steps in art amid the groups of the magnificent gallery

of contemporary portraits, the frescos of the wall, then fresh from the brush of Ghirlandajo, with such addition as correcting certain designs with the broad, firm outline of his own unerring touch. To make a study of Martin Schongauer's plate of the Temptation of Saint Anthony, on a larger plan, was to eagerly portray from life the fish of the market, harvest of the neighboring Mediterranean ports, and render faithfully the scales of the horned devils. The disapproving parent, Ludovico, who degenerated into the grumbler of later years, ever making fresh demands on the patience and generosity of the son to aid himself and the less gifted brothers, could only lead such a lad to the art school opened in the garden of San Marco by Lorenzo the Magnificent.

The prince of all the Medicis acquired his most gracious aspect in this garden, genial in praise and encouragement, keenly critical of defects, good-humored in bearing to the guardian of the spot, — the old Bertoldo, faithful pupil and partisan of Donatello, who could, on occasion, inform the munificent patron tartly that a cook was better paid than an artist. What other course would Lorenzo pursue than to pat Michelangelo on the shoulder, inspect the mask of a Faun, and pronouncing the physiognomy too youthful, return next day to find the front teeth knocked out, thus imparting the requisite appearance of shrivelled age?

O marvellous youth, crowned by a genius such as the world has rarely been required to contemplate! The eyes of the pupil of the garden of St. Mark were already lifted to a goal invisible to his contemporaries. The pack-thread restraints of the prudent father were incapable of binding the fluttering pinions of the eaglet, pausing on the brink of the home nest before launching forth into space in strong, unwavering flight. He came to this very church to hear Savonarola preach. Ardent, impressionable, profoundly interested, Michelangelo was one of the

throng of spell-bound listeners thrilled by the reformer's eloquence, awed by his denunciations of corruption and evil, — imagery awakened in his own mind by the terrors of the Apocalypse pictured as about to fall on Italy for her iniquities. We like to believe that Michelangelo never forgot the tones of Savonarola's living voice, and found anew the true bread of life in poring over the sermons in the house of the Via Ghibellina, in old age.

The earlier Florentines had listened to commentaries on Dante in the same temple, as the Neapolitan still lends ear to the improvisator and recitationist of the street corner, and the Roman of our day may be found on a morning of Lent listening calmly to the animated discourse of some Franciscan monk, with a cord knotted around his waist, and features glowing with the force of his own impassioned words.

Here was an element more swift and portentous than the emotional surface ripple of Southern races, in the magnetic influence of a mighty orator capable of swaying the multitude to his own will. Did Savonarola discern the youth, Michelangelo, in the crowd? Was he brought into personal contact with the protégé of the Medici, fostered in the palace of the Via Larga, and fed at the table of Lorenzo, who liked to gather about him men of genius? Can a nature as sensitive to all nobility, to all quickened possibilities of good in others, as was Savonarola's, have remained unaware of the very presence of the youth, by some subtle perception of a soul greater than his own? Michelangelo must have listened calmly, with eye and ear open to new and profound truths, not with the shame-faced defiance of frivolous Fra Benedetto, preparing to cast away the musk-scented garments and musical instruments of giddy pleasure for the cloister, the contrition of Fra Bartolommeo over his own studies of nude forms, the despair of Botticelli and Cronaca in maturity. The rays

of the star fell on the sleeping waters of conscience in this temple, where the earnest features of the preacher gazed forth from the monk's cowl, as in the bronze figure at the base of the Luther monument at Worms, promising to adolescence wings and not crutches in life.

Shaped to the uses of art by the study of anatomy, and moulded in mind and character by those sermons in the Duomo, as well as turned to the study of the Holy Scriptures which bore sublime fruit in the Sistine Chapel, together with the intimacy with Dante gained by reading aloud to his friend, Aldovrandi, at Bologna, henceforth there was no turning back for one destined to become a part of Italy.

How curious the picture of the times! The cynicism of Lorenzo's school of philosophy, the mockery of scepticism of the town, do not appear to have touched Michelangelo. Respectful and grateful, without servility to those generous patrons, the Medicis, the death of Lorenzo was a bereavement fraught with superstitious dread.

A bright star shone above the Villa Careggi; a thunder-clap reverberated near the Duomo; and the Medici banners fell within the sanctuary. Cardiere, Piero's lute-player, beheld the Magnificent in a vision, clad in black and tattered garments, a spectre believed to warn of the son's banishment. At Apulia the sky of midnight gleamed with three suns. At Arezzo a phantom host of armed men, mounted on gigantic horses, fought in the clouds. Wise men needed no portents to weigh Piero in the balance, and turn afresh to the teachings of Savonarola. On the 22d of January, 1494, the white flakes having descended on Florence to a depth of six feet, Piero ordered Michelangelo to make a statue of snow in the court of the palace. Thus had the mantle of the father fallen on the son.

Manhood, maturity, old age. We may follow each

phase delineated by many pens, and in many languages, pausing here at the base of the group which marked the limit of all labor. Accepting the length of nave from the altar to the entrance door, traversed by the mechanical dove in the spring festival, to ignite the car of Ceres in the square, as emblematic of man's earthly pilgrimage, Michelangelo went forth from the studio of Ghirlandajo and the garden of St. Mark, to seek ecclesiastical Bologna in political banishment; Rome, which he dreamed of transforming on such a scale as the expansion of the tomb of Pope Julius into the later dimensions of St. Peter's; the fastnesses of the Carrara Mountains, to wrest from Nature her purest marble, and where he would fain score a cliff facing seaward in the semblance of a human form for sailors to discern from afar over the blue sea; to return to Florence in dark days of siege and famine, protecting beautiful San Miniato with wool-sacks and earthworks as his bride; to rest by the wayside for a season, refreshed by the friendship of the noble lady, Vittoria Colonna; to leave "half of his soul" in the woods of Spoleto in old age.

The pencil capable of imitating the drawings of ancient masters did not falter before the cartoon of the soldiers surprised bathing in the Arno, for the great *sala* of the Cinque-Cento in the Palazzo Vecchio, in competition with Leonardo da Vinci, and possibly lingered more tenderly in the design made for Vittoria Colonna of the Madonna seated at the foot of the cross, with her dead son fallen from her knees to the ground, — that cross of strange form like a Greek *upsilon*, the two arms above connected by a piece of wood in beams assuming the mystical form of the triangle denoting the Trinity, with the words of Dante appended: "No one reflects how much blood it has cost."

The brush, scarcely pausing on easel pictures of now

doubtful authenticity, attained fulfilment of power in those vast cycles of time depicted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, while the sibyls and prophets, colossal and severe, grouped about the cornice, still seem to contemplate the world outspread below, and was once more wielded, after a lapse of thirty years, to complete the gloomy and terrible Last Judgment of the altar.

If the dome of the Pantheon suggested that of Santa Maria del Fiore, and the cupola of St. Peter resulted, the mind of Michelangelo combined the true value of architecture, painting, and sculpture, in the union of the sacristy of San Lorenzo, the niches of the Medici, bordered by double, fluted pilasters, the spaces between these pilasters and pillars used for shallow niches in the corners and for statues, the capitals surmounted by a balustrade-like ornament, and projecting cornice of dark marble wherein to frame the wall like a picture. Triboldò failed to execute the statues of Heaven and Earth, Silvio Cosini left the capitals unfinished, as did Giovanni da Udine the gold and stucco, with arabesques of masks, birds, and leaves. Il Penseroso needs none of these accessories, as he sits and muses with "everlasting shadow on his face" and those guardian forms at his feet.

The pen, transcribing noble verse from early youth to the sonnets of Vasari, found imperishable expression in the lines attached to the statue of Night:—

"Sleep is dear to me, and still more that I am stone, so long as shame and dishonor last among us. The happiest fate is to see, to hear nothing; therefore waken me not, speak gently."

The chisel that traced the furrows in the countenance of the Faun, the sleeping Cupid, the drunken Bacchus, completed the Pietà of St. Peter's, the David, wrought from the block left of the Duomo those mighty figures of the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo, the Moses of St. Peter in

Vincoli, and hovered over countless masses of marble, with decisive stroke here and there, half liberating the idea imprisoned within the inanimate surface, waiting to be set free by the master's will, until laid aside forever with the group before us.

In the twilight of the church slight effort of imagination is requisite to people the vast and barren interior with those colossal works representing the completion of a whole, — the youthful giant-slayer, nerved to heroism in his slender strength; the smooth-limbed god of the vine sipping the brimming chalice; those majestic symbols of Time hewn out in morbid haste and a frenzy of work, Life and Death, Suffering and Oblivion; the Law-Giver holding the tablets of Mount Sinai, the embodiment of virile strength.

In the twilight of the church the human shapes, rendered familiar to us by portraiture, surely gather to watch the progress of that solitary figure toward the goal: Lorenzo the Magnificent, prince and statesman, in the benevolent guise of patron; Pope Julius II., exacting and irascible in delay; Vittoria Colonna, noble of feature, clad in black velvet, with her white veil of a widow.

These he left on the road, leaves garnered to the grave. He was alone when the chisel dropped from the relaxed fingers, the day's labor finished, having outlived kindred, friends, memories, regretful, sorrowful, and sweet. The greatness of earth had grown terribly small to age. He may have realized, with Sophocles, that death was the true birth. Even then the upright, undimmed conscience of the man found clearest utterance: life had brought him, a frail bark, over stormy seas to port, and strict account must be given hereafter of every deed done in the flesh.

Dante stands yonder in the quaint fresco of the wall, expounding the "Divina Commedia." Savonarola preached in that pulpit, the echo of his words still alive in the hearts

of men. Michelangelo, the outward expression in form and color of both, wrought the group in the shadow of the high altar.

Let us leave the Church of the Lily in the keeping of the august trio, — the poet with his sensitive, aquiline features and brow laurel-bound; the reformer, with his eager and kindling glance piercing sluggish souls as with fire and sword; the artist, with the stern and furrowed physiognomy grown bleak, urging Art's chariot wheels to fresh progress.

We emerged by the door opposite the Street of the Watermelon. The lions support the columns of the porch, with the Madonna above and the old man holding the open book.

The sunset hour had come, and the day embraced, adopted the completed edifice. The new façade sparkled in the rosy reflections of upper air; but the shadow of the vast pile fell from dome and flank in a soft and mellowing harmony emblematic of the influence of time, the touch of the centuries.

Those airy postmen, the carrier-pigeons, had winged their flight far with the news of the morning. In the peal of the vesper bell all that gracious sisterhood of cathedral towns greeted Florence with a responsive note, — Siena, Lucca, Pisa, and a fainter vibration borne on the wind from distant Parma, Modena, and Cremona.

CHAPTER IX.

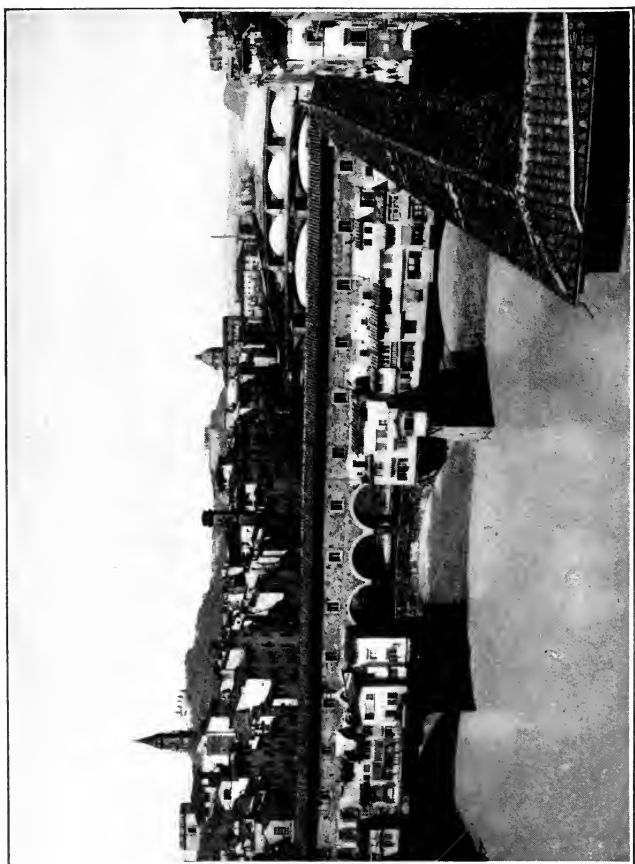
THE CHRIST CHILD.

A BOY pauses beneath the window, and thrusts a bit of palm through the grating, while a sudden smile irradiates his dark and mobile features.

The Florentine boy is not expansive, as a rule, with the wheedling softness of the South. He more frequently possesses the airy mockery of a citizen of the world, critical of his neighbor, and is inspired with an innate and immeasurable sense of personal superiority to all foreigners. The Florentine boy still sings through the streets those doggerel rhymes of the hour caught from the satires of the press, or the gibes of the puppet theatre, at the expense of all the world, especially the eccentric tourist. This lad has reason for gratitude to the occupant of the window, and shows it in a swift and unexpected way by thrusting the bit of palm, blessed at the Church of St. Mark, through the bars, and running away.

The boy, ten years of age, is an apprentice of a jeweller on the Ponte Vecchio, in one of those tiny nooks of shops overlooking the tawny tide of river, where turquoise and ruby still are set.

Yesterday a small package lying on the pavement of an unfrequented byway attracted the notice of the writer. Instead of keen-eyed saddler, cobbler, or locksmith at work in some dark shop, or hovering thief of the San Frediano quarter, alert to rob purse and casement, the abstracted stranger in search of suppressed cloister and



historical site picked up the package, opened the box, and discovered several gold chains.

Rule demanded taking the treasure to the *questura*, or the nearest guard, one of those dignified persons in cocked hats who stand on the Lung' Arno, the Via Tornabuoni, and in the Cascine. No guard was visible, and the name of the jeweller was pasted in the lid of the box. To seek the shop on the Ponte Vecchio, and deliver the package to the owner, was the work of a few moments.

The jeweller, one of those old Florentines with a refined and sagacious face, spectacles on aquiline nose, was examining a string of pearls. A small boy, pale, distrustful, and terrified, appeared in the distance. He had been intrusted with the box, and lost it, his youthful mind tempted astray by some diversion against which his nature was not proof.

The master was profuse in courteous thanks, while his countenance acquired an expression of severity. The small boy cannot have been annihilated for his delinquencies, for he has just brought the palm-branch, in the flesh, and in possession of all his bones. By what instinct of gratitude did he find his way to the Florence Window? Did he obey a childish impulse of gratitude in presenting the bit of palm to the stranger who proved an unexpected angel of deliverance in his career? How did he divine that the palm would possess a peculiar significance as coming from Savonarola's Church of St. Mark on Palm Sunday? Evidently the chubby apprentice has a poetical soul.

Accepting the spray of palm, and turning it in idle fingers, the image of the small apprentice lingers after he has departed from the Street of the Watermelon. Alert and inconsequent, with all his precocious intelligence, a grain of the old Attic salt of street repartee degenerated into sheer impertinence on his tongue, he forms a link with the past full of interest.

The richest page of Florentine history is that of childhood. Has any other city, including the surrounding country, ever produced an equal number of wonderful boys?

Dante ranks first, the sensitive poet of nine years, who received the image of the little Beatrice in his soul, as she appeared in her crimson robe at the spring festival, in the mystical rapture transmuted to posterity through the medium of verse, as light blends, separates, assumes new forms and dimensions, until absorbed into the full effulgence of the sun in the paradise of mature manhood. Dante believed in God, in virtue, in his country, in love, in glory, and in the destiny of the human race; but the old story, forever fresh, is that life began for him when his eyes first met those of Beatrice. He is the pure source of the sentiment of chivalry of the knight-errant inherent in the breast of every boy, who builds air-castles and dreams of the adventure of having some fair lady to protect with drawn sword and clash of conflict.

When will the brush of modern artists cease to find fresh inspiration in delineating the charming history of little Giotto, the shepherd, discovered drawing the portrait of one of his own sheep on a flat stone, with a bit of chalk, by Cimabue riding along on his good mule, clad in mantle and peaked hood? Had not Cimabue taken that ride in the country, as the human instrument of destiny, and fetched the lad to Florence for instruction, all Italy and the world would have been robbed of the Campanile, the frescos of Santa Croce, the decorations of the churches of Assisi or Padua.

Andrea del Castagno, born in 1390, in a hamlet of Mugello, was the son of a poor laborer of St. Andrea a Linari. Early left an orphan, the boy tended the flocks of his cousin near Castagno. How suggestive the picture of this little shepherd also, whose name, del Castagno, is associated with the shadow of chestnut woods, the ripen-

ing of the vine, the garnering of the Tuscan harvest. The humble lot of the peasant, healthy and ignorant of the powers dormant within him, would have been his portion had he not chanced upon an itinerant painter at work on a wayside tabernacle.

Andrea, fired to emulation of this new gift, began to scratch rude figures on wall and rock. These designs doubtless resembled the drawing of a child on a slate, or the first tracings of primitive races in caves, and on the bark of trees.

Bernardetto de' Medici, seeing the work, took the boy to the universal art-mother, Florence, for nourishment, where, as a realistic painter, he became a follower of Uccelli, and executed the equestrian monument of Niccolò Tolentino, in imitation of statuary, as a companion work to the tomb of Sir John Hawkwood.

With the life stain on Andrea del Castagno of having learned the new process of oil painting of Domenico da Venezia, and then murdered the fellow-artist in the dark, whether truth or calumny, we need not deal. The lad tending the flock in the shade of chestnut-trees, and watching the itinerant painter at work daubing a wayside shrine, with instinctive awakening of curiosity and emulation, is the image of childhood treasured in the memory.

Andrea Contucci da Sansovino, born a sculptor and architect, modelled sheep in clay or soft mould. Simone Vespucci, sent as *podestà* to the little mountain village near the Monte Sansovino, saw the boy's efforts, and brought him to Florence to place with Antonio del Pollajuolo. Sansovino also studied in the art school of the Medici garden. The boy, discovered by Vespucci, went far, — to Rome, to Portugal, to the House of Loretto; but he always retained a love of the hillside, the woods; and when fame brought him wealth, he retired to the country for four months of the year.

Lesser patrons among Florentine citizens than the Medici, the names of Cimabue or Vespucci acquire an unique interest in connection with their protégés; nor should Vecchietti be overlooked, who received the young stranger, Giovanni da Bologna, into his house for a term of two years, the mansion in the dismantled Ghetto with the grotesque devil on the corner.

Whence is derived the impression of Italian indolence? Not from the peasant toiling in the fields from Umbria to the Lombardy plain. Perhaps the phase of *dolce far niente* has passed away. Consider the life of the Florentine boy of the time of Savonarola. Fra Bartolommeo, called Baccio della Porta, because he lived near the Roman gate, was apprenticed to Cosimo Rosselli at the age of nine years, and expected to be the head of his family at twelve. Rueful little Andrea del Sarto, bound to the grim and fantastic Pier di Cosimo, when seven years old, escaped occasionally to the congenial atmosphere of the Church of the Carmine to study in the Brancacci Chapel. Ghirlandajo received the pretty name of the gold and silver wreaths fashioned in the *bottega* of his father, by which he is ever known as a great master.

How small the shrill-voiced apprentice still is! The tiny mason, with his jacket slung over one shoulder in a professional manner, slouches along the pavement imitating the heavy gait of his patron. The embryo milkman and baker's boy in aprons wheel their little carts about the streets of a morning, able to match quick wits with all the town. In no other city are the new coat of the tailor or the new boots of the shoemaker sent to their destinations by so wee an emissary as in Florence.

That the trust is occasionally misplaced, in the giddy volatility of urchinhood, is proved by the jeweller's box reposing on the curbstone, while the apprentice tossed coppers elsewhere. Sometimes a crowd gathers about the

dark shop on a narrow street, where an irate carpenter or locksmith has just thrashed a delinquent 'prentice, until the guards have interfered, with a bevy of sympathetic women, headed by an injured mother. As a rule, the boy is the natural growth of the baby, so early established on his own legs, and who pauses to dust his shoes on a holiday, with his pocket-handkerchief, in imitation of his father, at an age when the infants of other lands are viewed with maternal pride if able to toddle on dimpled feet. Beauty of youth!

If we placed together the portraits of the Cardinal Riario, Ippolito de' Medici, and Cesare Borgia, as embodying physical beauty, the study would be interesting. To group, instead, the heads of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and possibly Benvenuto Cellini, would be to add the aureole of genius, before which the flesh-tints of the youthful prelates must fade.

This quicksilver element of childhood in the Florentine population, pervading all the centuries, was discerned and estimated at its true value by Savonarola. His intercourse with youth furnishes one of the most curious pages of his time. The purity and delicacy of Savonarola's own nature found an instinctive affinity with the children. When he had attained the zenith of his power, and the multitude swayed to his will, men and women alike shrinking from the awful denunciation of evil launched from the pulpit of the Duomo, he still despaired of elevating those about him to the lofty standard which rendered Christ the only worthy ruler of the city. The words of Samuel were ever in his mind:—

“He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

“And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds: as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”

Where among the Florentines was Savonarola to find this ruler? The preacher capable of stamping indelibly the impression of great moral truths on the opening soul of the young Michelangelo, the teacher who had instructed the novices with peculiar tenderness in the cloister garden, turned to the children, full of precocious talent, germs of undeveloped greatness, and yet ever ready to reflect, chameleon-like, the public mood of the moment.

Dividing the sheep from the goats in the flock, a part of these children undoubtedly ebbed back to the sea of turbulence and corruption of the day, while the other half remained faithful to the teachings transmitted to their descendants. The balance of good and evil in human gratitude was displayed by the boys, thrusting sharpened sticks through the apertures in the boards of the platform leading to the funeral pyre, to wound the feet of the reformer, while wreaths of flowers were placed on the spot for centuries on the anniversary of his martyrdom.

The sprig of palm belongs to the early freshness of the Italian springtime. The faithful of the creed of the land behold in it the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem seated on the ass, while the people spread branches before him.

At Rome, the ceremonials at St. Peter's will conclude with the distribution of the palm blessed by the Pontiff. The palms sent from San Remo — the privilege of the Bresca family since the sailor of the name bade the architect, Fontana, wet the straining rope used to raise the Vatican obelisk — have been distributed, and will be kept to protect the house, the fields, the person of the recipient, from accident.

How significant the changes of progress! Formerly the palms arrived in a vessel anchored at the Ripa Grande; to-day the harvest is despatched as prosaic freight

by rail from Genoa. Should the palm belong to any creed?

We leave the Street of the Watermelon, pass the Baptistery, where a little citizen is being carried at the moment, as was once the infant Dante, traverse the Via Calzajuoli, the wide Piazza Signoria, and by the magnificent colonnade of the Uffizi, reach the Arno bank. White clouds, wind-driven, traverse the sky and cast shadows on the opaque current of the stream; snow still lingers on the summit of the Pratomagno above Vallombrosa.

A group of country folk emerge from their favorite Chapel of the Madonna delle Grazie on the right. A company of Bersagliere, with cocks' feathers fluttering in the breeze, march rapidly along the Lung' Arno della Zecca to their barracks, with the sharp note of the bugle.

We cross the Grazie Bridge, where the cells of the nuns have long been swept away, and the modern tramway taken possession, and pause at the Torrigiani Palace. The spray of palm guides us, — a wand possessing magical properties.

The Torrigiani Palace is situated on the Piazza Mozzi, and was designed by Baccio d'Agnolo, the family belonging to the Guild of Vintners of the fourteenth century. The exterior is not magnificent, while the modern luxury of the interior suggests the date of the First Empire, an impression only redeemed by the treasures of art in the suite of rooms open to visitors. If the Corsini palaces of Rome and Florence seem ever to bask in golden sunshine further reflected on the amber satin of hangings, the heavy gilding of cornice and furniture, the Torrigiani should be characterized as the Palace of the Bridal Chest. Here are preserved some of the coffers so quaintly decorated for the *trousseaux* of mediæval brides by famous painters of their time. Pontormo adorned cabinets and *cassone*; the brush of Benozzo Gozzoli traced the triumph

of David; Baccio d'Agnolo carved coffers, chairs, and bedsteads; at the *bottega* of Ridolfo Ghirlandajo any work of art could be ordered.

Savonarola exclaimed, "Do not let your daughters prepare their *corredo* (*trousseau*) in chests adorned with pagan paintings. Is it right for a Christian spouse to be familiar with Venus before the Virgin, or Mars before the saints?"

In Florence, the bridal city, the marble and alabaster of whose churches were compared by Michelangelo to the fair radiance of the bride, what pageants may have been associated with the fading tints of these very *cassone*!

The tragedy of the fair Ginevra, hiding in her wedding chest, which proved her coffin, finds a deep tinge of violence and passion in the desolated betrothed of the murdered Buondelmonte.

A gracious vision, at which the world still smiles wherever beheld, sweeps through the lofty apartments of the old *palazzo*, swift, evanescent, the filmy tissue of a bridal veil.

Clarice Orsini, arrived from Rome to wed Lorenzo the Magnificent, wears once more her robe of white and gold brocade, with the sumptuous mantle. Feasting and dancing take place before the Riccardi Palace, and the symbolical olive-tree is raised to an upper window.

Margaret of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Charles V., and bride of Alessandro de' Medici, is borne along in a magnificent litter by forty young men, clad in rich costumes, on the June day.

Violante of Bavaria enters the Porta San Gallo in a car studded with gems, to espouse Gian Gastone.

Scanning the pictures on the walls, we find the object of our visit to the Torrigiani Gallery in the third room. This is the portrait of a man with a fine and expressive face, wearing a dark dress and cap, with a pale landscape

for background. The work, ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci, or more probably to Lorenzo di Credi, is the portrait of Girolamo Benivieni, the Florentine gentleman, the friend of Savonarola, whom Benivieni esteemed as a saint and a prophet.

Born in 1453, Girolamo Benivieni, poet and scholar, was intimate with Lorenzo the Magnificent and the philosophers of his court. He attained the advanced age of ninety years in troubled times. The active partisans of Savonarola, prepared to defend his sanctity with sword and breast, might have cast at Benivieni the reproach addressed to Erasmus by Luther of wishing to walk upon eggs without crushing them, and among glasses without breaking, yet he had the moral courage to write a letter to Clement VII., reminding him of a promise to give desolated Florence a liberal form of government, and further recommending the memory of the poor brother of St. Mark's. The life of Benivieni escaped the result of such temerity, and he was buried in the Church of St. Mark, beside Pico della Mirandola and Politian.

Benivieni is chiefly known as a religious poet, and the composer of the lauds or canticles sung by the processions of children organized in bands by Savonarola to redeem the city from existing wickedness, and sow the seed of virtue for a rising generation. The children were the chosen instrument to carry light into dark places.

The old Girolamo Benivieni steps down from the picture-frame in the Torrigiani Gallery, and seems to say, smiling benevolently, "Behold my work as a man of my time." We obey, as much bewildered as edified by the spectacle.

We are led back across the Grazie Bridge, through the arcades of the Uffizi, along the Via Calzajuoli, and having gained the Duomo, turn to the left instead of regaining the Street of the Watermelon in the shadow on the right

hand. Following the Via Cerretani for a space, the Borgo San Lorenzo is reached.

Noisy, dirty, and more populous than formerly, owing to the vicinity of the new market established in the quarter of late years, the Borgo still possesses characteristic traits. The chief fruiterer of the city and his wife stand on the threshold, where they welcomed the Emperor of Brazil on one of his matutinal rambles of the inquiring traveller.

They are a handsome couple, fresh, buxom, and gray-haired, undisturbed alike by the clamor of venders and the wasps of children hanging about the luscious fruits displayed in the doorway.

The centre of sale for native linen, coarse, fragrant, and durable, and the long festoons of narrow bands for swaddling new-born infants, second-hand furniture, hemp-cloth, and black, yawning cellars, fringed with such wares as old clothes and shoes, where the inmates appear at the top of flights of stone steps, and dive again into obscure depths like trap-door spiders, the short thoroughfare opens on the Square of San Lorenzo, irregular in form, and surrounded by lofty and faded houses, with *loggie* and terraces. At one corner is the statue of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, wounded unto death at the battle of Mantua, at the age of twenty-nine years.

The splendor of the Medici expenditure is not apparent on the exterior of the Church of San Lorenzo, however rich the mausoleum entirely incrustated with precious marbles and mosaic, the sacristy containing Michelangelo's mighty statues, and the Laurentian Library, with its stained-glass windows shedding light on the Pandects of Justinian or Petrarch's letters.

The edifice due to the Christian matron, Giuliana, who vowed to erect a church to Saint Laurence if granted children, and the first basilica, built in 373, was blessed by

Saint Ambrose, and finally remodelled by Brunelleschi in 1435. The lofty beauty of the interior atones for all external roughness and insignificance. Above the door leading to the cloister is the singing gallery inlaid with rock-crystal and colored marbles by Verrocchio. The two bronze pulpits of Donatello and Bertoldo, placed for theological disputants, were removed to their present site when Leo X. visited Florence. Thorwaldsen's monument to Benvenuti, the most eminent Italian painter of this century, reveals Painting in the act of dropping her palette. Porphyry covers the spot where Cosimo the Elder lies before the main altar, and enshrines in sumptuous form the Grand-duchess Maria Anna, wife of Leopold II. At the extremity of the north transept is the Chapel of the Sacrament, containing the rich altar by Desiderio da Settignano. Above is placed the little statue of the Christ Child, once carried in the processions of the children, when the lauds of Girolamo Benivieni were sung.

The Christ Child stands with head bent and smiling lips, blessing his worshippers. One hand is raised, with two fingers and the thumb extended in the act of benediction, while the other holds the nails and the crown of thorns. The feet rest upon a cloud which descends on a sacramental cup. An angel bows in adoration on either side.

The statue is placed too high for close inspection; but all observers have been moved to pleasurable emotion in contemplation of the tenderness and perfection of the *Gesù bambino*. The work has been attributed to Donatello and to Desiderio da Settignano. The sweetness and grace are characteristic of the latter; the rounded limbs, the polished surface, the Italian *morbidezza*, all seem to speak of the artist, son of the stone-cutter of Settignano, whose ideally perfect plants of Tuscany, introduced into many of his

works, seem to linger in tradition in the Florentine studio of our day, where the *scalpellino* can readily chisel any flower or plant designated on the base of a pedestal. Desiderio da Settignano was praised by Raphael's father as the "brave Desiderio, so amiable and beautiful." Perhaps the sculptor breathed some of his own nature into the creation of the Christ Child.

The poet, Girolamo Benivieni, while an orthodox Christian, sought to give to his work the spirit of the Greek philosophy that had ruled the age in which he had grown up. Feo Belcari had been the leader of his youth. Savonarola and Pico della Mirandola were the later stars of his path. A steadfast friend, he sang of Belcari's death, still defended the doctrines of Savonarola thirty years after the reformer was burned, and chose to be buried beside Pico. Sonnets, canticles, eclogues, and songs flowed from his pen during his long life. He translated the Psalms into rhyme, remodelled one of Boccaccio's novels into stanzas, and made poetical reproductions from Greek and Latin. His lauds, tinged with mysticism, touched the limit of frenzy at times, and were sung in the streets, to counteract the evil influence of the carnival ditties. Certain verses run thus:—

"Greater pleasure sure than this,
Or sweeter no man ever had,
That for Christ's dear sake
To run with zeal and gladness mad.
Then let each man cry with me,
Mad, mad, mad we 'll ever be!"

Still more strange is the following:—

"I will give thee, soul of mine,
One medicine better far than all;
'T is good for every mortal ill,
And some the medicine Madness call.

"At least three ounces take of hope,
Three of faith, and six of love,
Two of tears, and set them all
A fire of holy love above.

"Let them boil three hours good,
Then strain them off, and add enough
Of humbleness and grief to make
Of this blest Madness, *quantum suff.*"

Girolamo Benivieni was one string in the musical instrument of the age. The noble lady, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, mother of Lorenzo the Magnificent, composed lauds, among others those of the Ecclesiastical Year, the Birth of Christ, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Life of Jesus on earth. Her works, published in the collection of the sacred poems of the house of Medici, were praised by Luigi Pulci and Crescembeni. The grandchildren were taught to repeat her verses in the domestic circle. There were *Laudi Spirituali* of Lorenzo as well, Lent demanding other food than his "*Poesie Volgare*" or "*Canzone a Ballo*."

The sister, Lorenza Strozzi, who has been ranked with Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Leonora Falletti, Gaspara Stampa, or Claudia della Rovere, composed a hundred Latin canticles.

In Florence it was a fashion to gather in the churches every Saturday after vespers, and sing five or six lauds composed by Lorenzo, his mother, Castellano Castellani, Pulci, or Feo Belcari, after which the image of the Virgin was uncovered, and all knelt. The favorite sanctuaries were Santa Maria Novella, Or San Michele, Santa Croce, the Carmine, and principally the Duomo. Candles were lighted, processions formed, reliquaries carried, and the populace joined in the service.

The phase of laud-singing would be incomplete without Boccaccio's hero, Gianni Lotteringhi, wool-comber, who directed the songs at Santa Maria Novella with infinite zeal and relish. He gave to the brethren shoes, hoods, and cloaks, and received a Pater Noster in the vulgar tongue, the song of Saint Alexis, the lamentations of Saint Bernard, the hymns of the lady Mathilda.

Farther back, the armies of penitents going about from town to town and country to country, kept alive the popular sacred poetry, while Fra Jacopone of Todi touched the keynote in his canticles, which echoed for three centuries, coming from lonely Umbrian convent, and growing in richness in the towns and villages, when the people gathered to sing after the day's work was done.

Fra Jacopone was succeeded by the Minorite Fra Ugo, Panziera of Prato, the Dominican Fra Domenico Cavalco, the learned Venetian, Leonardo Giustiniani. Girolamo Benivieni followed Feo Belcari in another epoch.

Savonarola turned to the children. He had the raised seats reserved for them in the Duomo when he preached. He organized a young republic, with peace officers (*pacieri*) to keep order and quiet in church, correcters, almoners, cleaners to polish the crosses, and inquisitors who entered houses to denounce gamblers and blasphemers, seize cards and dice, reprove women and girls for extravagance in dress. "In the name of Jesus Christ, the king of our city," was the formula with which they knocked at doors on their mission.

Opposed to the carnival license of dances, triumphal cars, mythological representations, and Bacchanalian orgies, the people were urged to sing the lauds of Girolamo Benivieni, and cry, "Viva Gesù Cristo!" The young men went about the town, insulting inoffensive pedestrians, or throwing mud, rags, and other missiles into the shops.

On Palm Sunday Savonarola's children were gathered

at San Marco to the number of eight thousand, clad in white garments, and each given a red cross. They went through the city as before a tabernacle, singing the lauds, and repeating, "Viva Cristo! Viva Firenze!"

Pausing at the Duomo, they received on silver trays the contents of the vases placed on the altar, full of rings, jewels, and trinkets, while chests contained robes of silk for further distribution in charity.

Returning to the Square of St. Mark, they joined the Dominicans in songs and dancing. Did Savonarola actually share the refrain? The emotional and mystical elements of his own nature kindled in poetical vein of kindred raptures to the sacred rhyming of the thirteenth century. Through the instrumentality of these children he established the first Monte di Pietà. "In the name of Jesus Christ, the king of our city."

The young inquisitors knocked on the portal, and women, moved to hysterical emotion, yielded up their Eastern shawls, pearls, wigs, rouge-pots, and essences. They penetrated the dens of gamblers, and swept away the dice and cards.

The people seem to have yielded with a remarkable docility. Fancy the hardened gamblers of London or Paris suffering the intrusion of a band of boys to bid them desist, and give up the implements of their trade! Fancy the Casino of Monaco pausing in the act of spinning the roulette-ball at the command of one of Savonarola's emissaries!

The vicious classes of Florence must have evinced gentleness of forbearance. The children had matters all their own way. The lambs went unharmed into the very jaws of iniquity. It is true they were of the same flesh and blood. Paternal pride contemplated the shining ranks with admiration, as the children are now decked to receive their first communion, and to appear before

the archbishop. The millennium appeared to be at hand.

Had our little apprentice of the Jeweller's Bridge lived in that time he would have doubtless belonged to the company. He would have been keenly alert for all carnival fun also, such as the burning of the tree, and other bonfires inseparable to the season, or the placing of the delightful old woman on the summit of the ladder under the *loggie* of the Mercato Nuovo in Mid-Lent, at a later date. This effigy, made of nuts and dried figs, was sawn asunder, and the fragments given to the crowd. The tradition of the ladder alone has descended to our apprentice, and he seeks occasion to pin one made of paper to the dress of every woman he meets on April Fool's Day.

On Shrove Tuesday, 1496, the Christ Child was carried, with attendant angels, to the Piazza Signoria, where a pyramid of Vanities had been prepared. The pyre was sixty feet in height, with a circumference of two hundred and forty feet. The children had collected this voluntary offering of sinful luxuries, — harps, lutes, mirrors, chessboards, marble busts of Cleopatra, Faustina, or Lucretius, masks, robes, Italian poetry, the Morgante, Boccaccio, Petrarch. The artists brought their pictures and sketches, Fra Bartolommeo, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi.

"In the name of Jesus Christ, the king of our city," sang the children.

The trumpets of the attendant Signoria sounded in the Loggia dei Lanzi, and the great bell of the Palazzo Vecchio rang.

The flames leaped up with the diabolical glee of destruction peculiar to the element fire, the red tongues seared the sketches into scrolls, the beautiful books shrivelled, the antique busts became blackened in the furnace heat, the tinsel of human adornment, — the robes, shawls, and wigs of silk, — transfigured for a moment, crumbled to

cinders, and the pall of smoke covered all the work of destruction. The figure of the sagacious Venetian merchant who, perceiving the loss, with practical good sense, while wholly failing to grasp the spirit of intention, offered twenty thousand crowns for the pile, has become historical.

Savonarola has been severely blamed by posterity for the loss to the world of rare objects burned in the bonfire presided over by the lovely Christ Child. The copy of Petrarch, illuminated and inlaid with gold, valued at fifty crowns, is still deplored. If a volume the more be missing, written on finest parchment by Vespaniano da Bisticci, with binding of *niello* work, of a date when book-making was a luxury, as embroidery of hand-labor before manufactured lace, it is ascribed to the holocaust of the Bonfire of Vanities by indignant posterity. The artists who were his followers cast no such reproach on Savonarola, and modern historians have done much to refute a popular error. Savonarola strove to purge and purify art from a monk's standpoint, when religious art was already dead, or rapidly verging to decline. The prior of St. Mark bought the Medici Library, with the debt to Philippe de Commynes cancelled.

In the next century valuable pictures and books were destroyed in Germany and Holland through the influence of John Calvin.

The Christ Child looked on. If marble lips could speak, the little statue, fashioned in the image of a benign Redeemer, must have said, "Cease this mad fanaticism of destruction, and strive to cleanse the heart from dross." The children pursued their way, repeating the lauds of Girolamo Benivieni.

At a later date Filippo Strozzi affirmed, "Times are changed. The goslings lead the geese to water."

The lauds have died away to silence. The old Girolamo

Benivieni returns to his place in the Torrigiani Gallery. The Christ Child is restored to the dim chapel in the Church of San Lorenzo, where the statue becomes a memory, veiled in clouds of incense and shrouded with crimson draperies.

In the chain of art how great the contrast between Michelangelo and Desiderio da Settignano, "the brave Desiderio, so amiable and beautiful" ! The statuette of the Christ Child still moves hearts to a tender admiration.

In the Street of the Watermelon, as the twilight deepens, the palm-branch is borne by one alone. The small figure of Savonarola passes, clasping the palm in his hands, and with reverent gaze uplifted above the Cathedral dome to the clear sky beyond. Who can doubt that the reformer, who so often traversed the narrow Street of the Watermelon in life, his vision purified of such earthly mists as the Bonfire of the Vanities, has, through fiery trial and great affliction, gained the presence of his Creator ?

"Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ;

"And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

We have here, in its fullest significance, and without creed, the glory of the palm.

CHAPTER X.

A CHORD OF MUSIC.

AT the Easter season the flower-vender passes through the Via Cocomero, and holds up her basket to the window. The *fioraja* is a well-known figure, in her broad Tuscan hat, her false black ringlets and gold ear-rings swinging on either side of her brown face. She is old, having enjoyed her prime in the time of the grand-ducal court, but her smile is still coaxing, and her dark eye crafty. She is reputed to be rich, and to have given her daughter a snug dowry on her marriage. She still haunts the railway station to welcome, with fawning caresses, the newly arrived prince or emperor, travelling incognito. In her faded and eccentric costume she suggests the club door, the ball, the duel, and a nature as crooked as the labyrinth of the Ghetto and Old Market.

A few francs are slipped through the bars protecting the casement; and lo! the embrasure is transformed into a bower of bloom and fragrance in keeping with the day.

"Behold the resurrection of the world," said Sydney Smith, indicating with his cane the first crocus springing from the green sod. Inhale the sweetness of the Easter greeting of the flowers! Here are chrysanthemums in richest tints of cream and brown, golden cassia, primroses, narcissus of a sulphur-yellow hue, double Russian violets, the waxen tendrils of lily-of-the-valley, hyacinth, rose-tinted and lilac, mingled with the deep saffron of orchids and the fire of tulips. The odors of jasmine and helio-

trope linger on the air after the old flower-woman has passed, singing a ditty in a cracked voice. Easter brings souvenirs to her faded soul.

These sheaves of dewy lilies, all this wealth of perfume, should have been the offering of some church shrine in a Catholic city, instead of glorifying the stone ledge of a dark window in the Street of the Watermelon. Across the court the musician is playing with light and skilful touch the chorus of Angels from the opera of "Mephistopheles," by the modern composer, Arrigo Boito. Why does the strain of melody suggest the Bargello rather than any church?

The town is animated; the crowd throngs every thoroughfare. After the silence of Good Friday the bells of all the towers peal out on the sunny air. The sky is of a tender blue, melting to an opalescent haze on the horizon of hills, and the Arno, catching unwonted reflections of turquoise and gold on the tawny surface, flows toward the sea with the slender poplars of the bank rippling in the light breeze.

Nature sings a hymn of praise to the Easter day which is the promise of the spring. Behold the resurrection of the Son of Man, the risen Christ! Behold also the resurrection of the earth in germ, stem, and leaf! The flowers in the window exhale incense from every golden chalice of cup-shaped blossom. The musician, by that subtle touch on the ivory keys of a pianoforte, sends us forth in search of a chord of music which has existed for centuries, and is so much a part of Florence and Tuscany that we find in it the fullest expression of Easter triumph and worship.

Skirting once more the Piazza of the Duomo, flooded with golden sunshine, and following the Via Proconsolo, the narrow street is soon gained where is located the Bargello.

Erected for the Podestà, or chief magistrate of Florence, and renovated in 1373, the building with its massive free-stone blocks, quarried at Fiesole and Gonfolina on the Arno, forms a shadow, menacing and impenetrable, even in the brightness of the Easter-tide, while a damp and mouldy breath emanates from subterranean dungeons as if to warn the volatile crowd what men have been.

No joyous note peals from the tower where once swayed La Montanara, — the bell that gave the signal to the citizens to return home and lay aside their weapons after conflict. The frescos of the Duke of Athens and the conspirators have faded from the walls; the haggard features of prisoners have vanished from the barred casements; the pavements, and possibly the human conscience as well, have been washed pure of the blood-stains of centuries.

Here is a sermon in stones such as will be preached in no church of Florence, Savonarola having long been silent.

Europe has but one Bargello. What marvel that the historian should discover ever-fresh interest in its archives, the poet seek inspiration in the soul agony of passion, patriotism, revenge, and wrong of its captives, and the artist linger in delineation of light and shadow on sculptured column and *loggia*? What marvel that the community rejoiced when in 1841 the Piedmontese, the Englishman, and the American succeeded in uncovering the Giotto fresco of the chapel wall, long used as a larder for the prisoners?

Cosimo I. abolished the office of Podestà, assigning the castle palace to the Bargello, or head of the police, instead.

Enter the dark and lofty armory by means of the modern ticket of admission, and pause a moment in the adjacent chambers as well, attracted by the standards of spears, falchions, and swords, the mail once worn by the Black Band of Giovanni de' Medici, the primitive bronze

cannon, the shield of a Crusader, with a cross and an ear of wheat as emblems of immortality, the arms of the Tuscan order of the Knights of Saint Stephen.

One figure still possesses a vivid personality on the site of the torture-chamber, with human bones *too* near the surface beneath the trap-door in the pavement, and entrance walled up of the Porta delle Morte. This is Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, the foreign Podestà of predilection, sent to quell the civic broils of Guelph and Ghibelline parties in those earlier days when the town waited in a fever of aimless agitation for the house of Medici to put forth that iron hand in a silken glove, and quell liberty.

"Come and rule over us, and repel the lord of Lucca, Castruccio Castracane, at all hazards," was the appeal of Florence, repeated in our day by Greece, Spain, or Bulgaria.

In vain Florence petitioned the German olive-tree, the French fig-tree, or the vine, the papacy, for such aid. Then King Robert of Naples, the bramble, replied, "Put your trust in my shadow."

The bramble, instead of coming in person, or being represented by his son, the Duke of Calabria, sent a lesser bramble as his vicegerent, a thorn, the creature of his court, Walter de Brienne, to rule the fair city. Born in Greece, of French and Asiatic blood, the stranger was plausible and ingratiating until emboldened by power to tax the forbearance of the citizens to the utmost limit, with the fearful culmination of the siege within these walls, nobles, artisans, and populace united, and the cowardly thrusting forth of the boy, son of the Conservatore, William of Assisi, to the mob in the street. The duke signed an abdication and departed.

Thus did the bramble set fire to the kingdom of the cedar of Lebanon.

The beautiful court is in full sunshine. The square Guelphic battlements of the building are visible, rising toward a sky as blue as the background of a Luca della Robbia medallion. A shaft of golden light floods the three sides of the cortile nave, where the arcade of Gothic ribbed vaulting, springing from foliated brackets, rests on massive columns. The shield of the Duke of Athens, lions rampant, and the lilies of France, still adorns the first arch, with the shield of Florence, a red cross on a white field, and an eagle with a dragon in its claws beyond, and quaint coats-of-arms of other Podestàs. Still more curious are the stone tablets of the ancient divisions of the city, — the Dove of the Holy Spirit for Santo Spirito, the Cross for Santa Croce, a Sun for Santa Maria Novella, a gilded Baptistery, with double keys, for San Giovanni.

In the middle of the court is the well, where Florentines famous in history were beheaded, the hot blood current chilled forever on the mould-stained brink.

Yonder is the stone stairway, divided in the centre by the iron gates, lion-guarded, modelled after that of the castle of the Guidi at Pioppi in the Casentino, by Agnolo Gaddi, where Dante listened to the tale of Pisa's Famine Tower from the lips of the chatelaine, daughter of Count Ugolino delle Gherardesca. Will not the sympathy of the poet, thrilled in immortal verse, flow through language as long as the Arno shall ripple over the keys confided to the stream?

Above is the graceful *loggia* attributed to Orcagna, with the three arches once divided into as many cells. Step by step the prisoners used to descend the stairway, accompanied by a Capuchin monk, to the execution below. Step by step we ascend, noting the irregular apertures in the wall where surely the wind makes moan on winter nights like the lamentations of the human beings once pent up within the narrow space.

At the summit of the stairway we are met by the museum cat, plump, clothed in rich fur of silvery depths of fineness, a true Puss-in-Boots, affable in demeanor to all the world, and still frisky in youthful spirits. The cat leads the way with an agile bound, past the three bronze bells of antique mould in the *loggia*, as if prepared to fill the rôle of cicerone. The custodians, patient and well-bred men, smile at the fresh caprice of the universal pet.

Puss-in-Boots whisks before us into the superb Hall of the Judges, designed by Agnolo Gaddi, where all those colossal groups of the combats of Hercules, by Vincenzo Rossi, Virtue Triumphant, by Giovanni da Bologna, Michelangelo's Bacchus and Adonis, Bandinelli's Adam and Eve, are ranged around the wall, without detracting from the immense size of the apartment. Between these groups are placed Donatello's round-limbed dancers and Luca della Robbia's choristers.

Other halls extend beyond, dark and mediæval in form and decoration. Precious glass and cut crystal of exquisite shapes sparkle in the obscurity, as snowflakes might gleam in fairy prisms of design in a cavern, if endowed with phosphorescence; amber and tortoise-shell, wrought in altar-pieces and temples, have the tawny lustre of the topaz; ivory, with the creamy whiteness of the freshly peeled almond, or the yellow tinge of age, has here every phase of Oriental and Western carving, from the crucifix of the Renaissance to the Roman diptych of the fourth or fifth centuries, suggestive of the flat surfaces of Nineveh and Babylon; gospel covers and caskets for the altars of cathedrals in the form of catacomb sarcophagi; enamels of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in reliquaries and shrines, incrustated with figures; and the clays of Calabria or Spain in many-tinted majolica.

In the shadow the projecting chimney of the audience-chamber of the Podestà has the dogs and fire-irons remain-

ing where the tyrant Duke of Athens warmed himself; while the collection of Urbino ware, magnificent in color and form, brought to Florence on the marriage of Vittoria della Rovere to the Grand-duke Ferdinand II., gathers all the light on vase and plaque.

In the shadow the ancient chapel still illustrates the feuds of the Blacks and Whites, once divided in two by a false ceiling, the upper portion serving as a prison, and the lower for magazine, larder, or kitchen, until the energetic application of modern razors on whitewash disclosed the ghost of Dante, holding a lily, the portraits of Corso Donati and Brunetto Latini, with heaven and hell designed on the adjacent partitions, — all fruit of the indefatigable brush of Giotto.

In the shadow lustrous bronze — Donatello's David, the Mercury Poising for Flight, of Giovanni da Bologna, the rival works of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi for the Baptistery doors — only yields a place to mellow marble, tender Madonnas of Mino da Fiesole, precious fragments from tomb and frieze of Benedetto da Rovezzano.

Above stairs tapestry, carved woods, and stained-glass, in bewildering profusion, lead to the collection of Della Robbia ware, — Virgin and Child in youthful loveliness, framed in green foliage, Christ descending into limbo, carrying the banner, saints in the orange-tinted robes of a later period. Harvest of dismantled convents and corner shrines treasured here, the Della Robbia work should be nearest the blue heaven visible above the square battlements of the Bargello.

We do not leave the first hall. Where shall we find a chord of music for the Easter season unless in pausing before the singing children of Luca della Robbia?

These detached portions, exquisitely carved in marble, and embodying every variety of form and movement in graceful combination, were executed for the organ-loft of

the Cathedral, to be placed opposite the dancing boys of Donatello. The former gain by close proximity of inspection, while the latter remind the spectator that they were executed by the master who moulded the draperies of Il Zuccone, in masses shapeless to the uninitiated, in the studio, with nicest calculation of the distant niche of the campanile in which the statue was to be placed, and was also capable of tracing the gradations, in *stiacciato*, or low relief, of the Saint Cecilia and the young Saint John. The Della Robbia choristers rest against the wall of the great hall. In the groups, wrought with such marvellous delicacy, the faces are instinct with animation, mirth, joy, frowning perplexity, assumption of authority in adolescence, restraining cherubic infancy; the young bodies palpitate with life, the swift blood dancing in healthy veins, in response to expansion of movement and song. Cymbals clash; little drums resound; the leaves of choir-books rustle in eager fingers. All lips are parted to give utterance to the strain, — maidens with hands entwined, youths pressed together to read the notes on the outspread page, roguish urchins, and chubby little girls. What is their song?

“Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power.”

Is not this the leading note of the youths with the open book?

“Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness.”

The maidens take up the strain.

“Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp.”

The instruments vibrate in harmony with the voices.

“Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.”

The light forms sway in rhythmical measure.

"Praise Him upon the loud cymbals : praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals."

A little girl winces and places her hands over her too-sensitive ears.

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

Such is the full Easter anthem of Luca della Robbia's singing children in the old Bargello of Florence. The Psalter is the liturgy of man. Surely the children sing one of the morning hymns of the Church, whether Latin, Greek, or Syrian. Emanating from the depths of simple devotion, a responsive sympathy is awakened in the observer. Luca della Robbia gave to the theme expression; and to him we of a later age are indebted for the loveliness of this chord of music.

The family name is associated with the fate of Savonarola. The Della Robbia received the priestly benediction from the hands of the prior of St. Mark, fought for his cause, strove to defend his life in the siege of the monastery, revered his memory with the loyalty of serious and God-fearing men. The founder of the race lived before the day of Savonarola; but the labors of nearly a century become associated with the reformer, both from his influence on the descendants and as conforming to the purity of the standard of religious art which he strove to maintain.

Luca della Robbia was born in 1388, in the Via San Egidio. As a boy, having been taught arithmetic, reading, and writing, he was next apprenticed to the goldsmith, Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, reputed to be the best master in Florence. How remarkable the contrast of his career and that of Michelangelo, passing by swift transition from the Ghirlandajo frescos of the Church of Santa

Maria Novella to the contemplation of antique statues in the garden school of St. Mark.

The youth of Luca della Robbia was scarcely less admirable in its way. He began his studies in the shop of the goldsmith, as did Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, the Pollajuoli, and designed in wax, marble, and bronze. An absorbing devotion to his calling made him chisel by day, and often spend the night modelling, standing until morning in order not to cease from drawing, or testing some fresh experiment. Hunger, cold, and thirst could not subdue the kindling ardor of the artist within his breast.

He furnishes another type in the varied elements of the city; for while the youth, later led to ruin by Lorenzo the Magnificent or Filippo Strozzi, revelled, sang, and decked themselves in rich raiment, with the vanity of girls, Luca della Robbia, with stern self-control, robbed his nights of sleep to perfect the images of beauty thronging his brain and intoxicating his imagination.

The butterfly revellers of the public pageants have long been swept away to oblivion, while his creations still endure to charm the eye and move the soul, — his glazed medallions impervious to damp and imperishable as brass and bronze.

Such slender threads of his history as can be traced indicate that he went to Rimini at the age of fifteen years, in company with other youths, to make statues and ornaments of marble for Sigismund Malatesta, where he worked in a chapel of the Church of San Francesco, and on a sepulchre for the tyrant's wife. The execution was so creditable that he was recalled to Florence to assist in the embellishment of the Duomo, where the singing children were designed to adorn the organ-loft, with a metallic angel at either end, opposite to the frieze of Donatello. His labors still remain in the bronze doors of the sacristy,

wrought with Michelozzo and Maso di Bartolontini, two altars, and the lunettes above each portal. He was intrusted with the execution of the story of the campanile designed by Andrea Pisano. Facing the church Luca placed the bas-reliefs of the Arts and Sciences, — Donato teaching grammar, Plato and Aristotle philosophy, a lute-player embodying music, Tolomeo astronomy, and Euclid geometry.

Then he abandoned marble and bronze for terra-cotta, and laid aside the chisel for the *stecchini*, seeking to give his creations durability by means of a glaze. Had he experimented in coloring, in vitrification, with the aid of litharge, antimony, and other minerals, during those nights in his boyhood when eager pursuit of knowledge kept him wakeful? After much study of the problem he succeeded in perfecting the glaze in his own fashion.

The idea was not original with him. Enamelled pottery was known to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, and the Italians of the Middle Ages, while the ceramic artists of Spain and Majorca learned of the Arabs the manufacture of glazed vessels and tiles. Twenty years earlier Bicci di Lorenzo had modelled and glazed the terra-cotta group of the Coronation of the Virgin for the Hospital of San Egidio at Florence. Luca della Robbia none the less made a new phase in art, which proves Lord Bacon's assertion, "It is absurd to suppose that things which have never yet been done cannot be accomplished except by means not yet tried."

Modelling in clay was a sort of painting to Michelangelo, while stone required to be freely and powerfully handled. To this graceful modelling we owe the Della Robbia groups of that first coloring, pure white enamel on the blue and green of background, the girlish Madonnas, the dimpled Christ Child reposing amid wreaths of foliage, the sweet, attendant angels, the benign saints

leaning out of niches to bestow a benediction, the tabernacles of convent walls, the heraldic escutcheons of palace courts. The imperishable glaze has preserved, crystallized the ideal, as it were, for each of us, defying storm, heat, and cold to destroy the babies in swaddling clothes of the medallions on the portico of the Foundling Hospital in the Piazza Annunziata, or damp and mildew to deface the tomb of Bishop Benozzo Federighi in the Church of San Francesco e Paolo at Bellosguardo.

The founder of the school, welcomed by all Europe, was the embodiment of quiet perseverance and industry. In his efforts to solve the problem of the enamel he did not attain the height of grandeur or despair of Palissy, the potter, feeding the furnace fires with the household furniture of his destitute family, or of Benvenuto Cellini, rising from the bed of fever to give the two hundred vessels of his home to the flames, in order that the metal should not cease to flow destined to emerge in the beautiful form of the Perseus of the *loggia*.

We have the portrait of Luca della Robbia in maturity, the features massive and grave, the head enveloped in heavy folds of drapery. In the meagre details of his life the incident is full of charm of the artist once seeking the little town of Gavinana in the Pistoja Mountains, after illness, and leaving up there as record of his visit a Nativity and a Crucifixion. To the artist, restored by the pure air of the heights of the summit of the Bologna Pass, the work may have signified a votive offering in Nature's temple of health, while to the mountaineers of generations the delicate groups of figures standing out against the blue background must have meant a celestial visitation, and the name of Luca della Robbia been pronounced forever blessed.

Andrea della Robbia, nephew and pupil, was instructed in the secret of the school. Andrea had seven sons, five

of whom followed the same calling. The eldest, Girolamo, went to France, and became the head of the families of the Seigneurs de Pateaux and Grand Champs. Paolo and Marco took the Dominican habit under Savonarola. They executed the medallion portrait of the reformer, with the design of a city and towers on the reverse, and a hand holding a dagger pointing downward. It was thus the fruit of the Della Robbia school, extending over the period of nearly a century, was brought, as the most touching, tender, and reverential phase of religious art, and placed at the feet of the prior of St. Mark.

The museum cat, bored by inaction, has sidled through one doorway after another, while we linger before the detached fragments of the choristers resting against the wall. Returning to the great hall, the animal suffers a swift, inscrutable change from purring amiability to lean, bristling suspicion, the yellow eyes opening wide, the claws unsheathing stealthily, the fur undulating on a trembling body.

What does the cat see in the old prison, invisible to our eyes? What does the cat hear imperceptible to our obtuse ear? The feline senses are more delicately keen than those of man.

In the centre of the hall a trap-door communicates with a well below. Four stories of cells filled this superb apartment, until cleared away for the present uses. At the extremity of the audience-chamber of the Duke of Athens a solitary prisoner was once kept chained, — a Franciscan monk turned brigand, who lived to the age of eighty-one years.

Do these shapes rise before Puss-in-Boots at the moment? Or is the cat the natural ally of evil spirits, the uncanny and witch-like asserting full sway over plump kittenhood in the presence of Luca della Robbia's angels?

The children strike their cymbals, sway in rhythm, and sing their perpetual song of rejoicing. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise ye the Lord!" On the Easter morning the words of song have wings, and soar forth from the heavy casements of the Podestà's castle to join the choir of hillside and mountain peak. "Praise ye the Lord!" The slopes about Siena add their harmonies, and the last note resounds from La Vernia, the monastery founded by Francis of Assisi, after the Count Orlando dei Catani, lord of Chiusi, had helped the first pilgrims to build a hut of branches, where the Ascension, the Assumption, the Nativity, and the Crucifixion of Luca della Robbia find kinship with the voice of the nightingale, the violets, daffodils, and cyclamen of the forest glades, rather than the bitter cold of the Chapel of the Stigmata in the winter midnight, when the monks celebrate Mass.

The bells ringing tumultuously, the light foliage of the trees rippling in the breeze along the Arno bank, the verdure of the encircling meadows, the very spheres in the space of universe beyond, complete the chord of music.

The world progresses. The *oubliettes* and dungeons of the Bargello are sealed in disuse; the image of the Duke of Athens has faded from the tower; the vast halls are dedicated to a loan collection containing a silver plate of Cellini, a triptych by Orcagna, a Virgin of Niccolò Pisano, wood-carving of Grinling Gibbons, where soldiers once thronged the guard-rooms, and stern judges consigned their fellow-men to the darkness of the torture-chamber.

Easter flowers bloom in the embrasure of the Florence Window. Across the court the musician is playing the chorus of Angels from the modern opera of "Mephistopheles."

Emanuel Deutsch, in the rapture of the stranger's first

admiration, pronounced Florence the andante in the vast second and third movements of Rome, and Naples the final cantabile in the symphony of glory, Italy. How many souls have been amply satisfied with the rich melodies of the andante movement?

CHAPTER XI.

THREE PICTURES.

I. A MONK'S CELL.

RAIN obscures the window, persistent, long-continued rain, with warm currents of air, laden with moisture, sweeping up from the sea.

The aspect of the Street of the Watermelon is dreary and dull; the stillness oppressive, even drowsy. At the lower end of the thoroughfare the pile of building of the Duomo forms a mass of blotting shadow, and a surface deeply stained with mildew, as if the mire of centuries had been cast at the marble, and the sweet influences of sun and wind were needful to make the mind of man forget.

The Five Lamps of the Tabernacle rust on their chains, and the withered flowers, placed on the ledge below by a devout hand, drop, one by one, on the wet pavement.

Here, as in other portions of Florence, may be noticed a puzzling custom. Casements are open; and curtains, whether of lace or muslin, hang limp, while the steaming moisture penetrates freely to furniture hangings and the linen of beds within doors. These same sashes will be carefully closed in fine weather, if dust is abroad. What may be the theory of housewifely prudence when due heed is given to the effects of sun and dust, yet courts the dampness of weeks of rain in unheated apartments?

To enter the door of the convent of St. Mark in such weather is to defy the depressing influences of a wet

season. Picture galleries may be sombre, and the frescos of churches wellnigh indistinguishable, but San Marco triumphs over the gloom of weeping skies. The sward of the cloister is fresh and green; a pale rose blossoms in a sheltered nook.

On the wall of the vestibule, surrounded by other pictures enveloped in shadow, the face of Savonarola is visible in clear and vivid contours.

Is this the veritable portrait painted by the serious and devout young man, Baccio della Porta, later enrolled in the ranks of art as Fra Bartolommeo, after listening to the teachings of Savonarola, near the Persian rose-tree of the cloister garden? The portrait was sent to the family of the preacher at Ferrara, then brought back to Florence by Filippo di Averardo Salviati, who afterward gave it to the Dominican nuns of Prato. The nuns kept the treasure until the suppression of their convent in 1810, when after many accidents it was purchased by Signor Ermolao Rubieri.

Whether the head in the corridor be the work of Fra Bartolommeo or not, we recognize him in it. The place speaks of the artist; and the softly falling rain, tinkling in the water-spouts or dripping from the arches of the cloister, is an harmonious cadence of memory. Fra Bartolommeo was the greatest of the painters brought under the influence of Savonarola. The intercourse between master and disciple was close, and the influence on the gentle mind of the latter profound. One cannot define Michelangelo as fettered to any single creed, save a universal system of Christianity as comprehensive as the cycles of time in his own compositions.

The familiar story of Fra Bartolommeo's career is like a ray of pure light penetrating the dark streets of the quarter across the Arno.

The little Baccio, at the age of nine years, was taken

by the household friend, Benedetto da Majano, to the studio of Cosimo Rosselli. Doubtless Benedetto da Majano had inspected early efforts at childish drawing with a discerning and sympathetic eye, as Cimabue gazed on Giotto's portrait of the sheep, or De' Medici scanned the designs of Andrea del Castagno.

Baccio was apprenticed to Cosimo Rosselli to grind colors, sweep the workshop, and run on errands. At the age of twelve his father, a retired muleteer, dwelling near the Porta Romana, died, leaving Baccio the head of the family, with a stepmother, and several small brothers. Docile, modest, earnest, the boy acquitted himself creditably of all his duties. He was born full of grace and virtue. He resembled the plant, delicate yet tenacious, that climbs in growth to a purer and higher atmosphere. His comrade and lifelong friend, Mariotto Albertinelli, more closely resembled a rich and wayward exotic, consorting with the rankest company of weeds, until overpowered and choked by the baser element. These two were as one soul and one body, affording the remarkable contrast frequently noticeable in the friendships of youth cemented in manhood. Baccio, sent on commissions to the nuns of St. Ambrogio, admired their works of art. Albertinelli sought the garden of St. Mark's, under Bertoldo, where his precocious talents attracted the praise of the Medici family, and the sensuous imagery of his own nature found a luxurious expansion in the study of classical mythology.

Baccio, timid and retiring, studied the frescos of the Church of the Carmine in preference. Savonarola's voice began to be heard, denouncing the sins of Florence, of Italy, of humanity; and the sacred fire of fervent piety was kindled in the soul of Baccio della Porta. He was among the throng of listeners attracted by the eloquence of the monk. The power of religious enthusiasm bent

and swayed him like a reed. His sensitive conscience became troubled by the slightest blemish of doubt on his work and life, measured by a new standard. Brought in close acquaintance with Savonarola, he painted that first portrait, his brush already skilful; and the method of Cosimo Rosselli is apparent in the low key and clouded transparency of oil-color, while the features reveal the decision of character and growing consciousness of power of the reformer. The significant line, expressive of the artist's fanatical devotion, was appended to the painting, *Hieronymi Ferrariensis a Deo missi prophetæ effigies*. The motto was carefully concealed in the time of Savonarola's trial.

Sculptors, painters, and miniaturists were attached to the Dominican order by Savonarola, — Ambrogio della Robbia, Filippo Tapaccini, Fra Benedetto. The reformer's strictures on the degradation of art made a serious impression on Baccio della Porta. Had the Christian element wholly expired with the holiness of Fra Angelico? Savonarola strove to once more exalt the artists just as he attempted to renew the government of the city, and formed the children into bands of assistants. His immediate influence and the tragedy of his own fate struck and unnerved the men of genius brought in closest contact with his own fervent soul and austere example.

The young Baccio, open to all sweet and holy influences, fused into the portrait the reverence and admiration of the disciple, giving to other centuries the singular profile perpetuated by the Della Robbia in terra-cotta, and cut in the gem by Giovanni delle Corniuele.

Worldly Mariotto Albertinelli scoffed at the esteem of his friend for the preacher. Albertinelli, already prone amid the riotous weeds, yet blossoming with the richest promise, could he but be rendered industrious, stanchly upheld the classical school and the study of the nude,

doubtless using effective argument, such as might now be heard in any modern studio.

Baccio raised his fellow-student from the companionship of nettles, and formed a partnership of interest; but Albertinelli ever lapsed away after a time to favorite vices and follies. What he was capable of achieving at his best may be seen and enjoyed to the full in the rich and beautiful Salutation of the Uffizi.

Then ensued the climax of emotion and sacrifice, when Baccio hastened to the pile of the Vanities in the Piazza Signoria, guarded by the Christ Child and the boys in shining raiment, and cast all his drawings of the class condemned by Savonarola, the precious fruit of an industrious youth, to the consuming flames. The Venetian merchant inspires a kindred regret in later generations. If a hand could have been extended and rescued the designs of the eager young Baccio from the cruel fire!

Albertinelli, surely in advance of his day, stoutly refused to give up his pictures in a similar fashion, and continued to sacrifice to Venus and the goddesses of beauty.

The rain makes a sad monotone to thought, trickling from cornice and arch, while the frescos of the cloister reveal gay coloring in contrast with the sombre weather.

Baccio della Porta, the timid nature, hurried along on the tide of partisan agitation, was one of the besieged here during the horrors of the night, when the mob gathered with oaths and menace in the *piazza* outside, the dead and wounded fell on the altar steps of the adjacent church, and the murmur of Fra Sacromoro became audible in the convent that the shepherd should sacrifice himself for the sheep. Savonarola went forth to meet his fate by yonder door.

Grief, anguish, and terror overwhelmed the painter. We see it all, with calm pulses, in the softly falling rain, through the mist of years. Baccio della Porta, docile and

faithful little apprentice of Master Cosimo Rosselli, upright little stepson and brother, tender friend of the wild and wayward Albertinelli, vanished from the world of the town, the daily greeting of the neighbors, the cheese-monger, the vintner, the baker, who had known him so long and given him the name of Baccio of the Gate. The worthy souls sang the lauds of Girolamo Benivieni themselves, and closed their shops at the hour of the day when Savonarola preached, grumbling a little at the rigid fasting which deprived them of custom. No doubt the change in the artist inspired them with awe and respect. Perhaps they shook their heads over the loss to the world of one who promised to become a great painter.

Baccio took the Dominican order, became a monk, retired to the solitude of a convent cell, and was henceforth known as Fra Bartolommeo. The conflict had broken his spirit. Savonarola had been seized, bound, imprisoned, tortured on the rack. The prophet whom Baccio revered had been burned at the stake, and his ashes scattered to the Arno from the Ponte Vecchio. Fra Bartolommeo withdrew from the strife of the world in mourning, penance, and dejection. Evil had triumphed, and the wicked rejoiced. His voice was not heard, unless in the low-murmured lamentations of the Savonaroliani, bewailing the times, and chiefly audible through the medium of Fra Benedetto's "*Cedrus Libanus*."

Mariotto Albertinelli, as if in defiance, joined the rank of revellers, and opened a wine-shop or tavern on the site of Dante's birthplace.

The monk undoubtedly pined in the inaction of his cell. He had cast his sketches to the flames, and laid aside his brush, as a supreme sacrifice essential to his salvation. Did sagacious eyes about him, the superior of his monastery, or fellow-artist concealed beneath the cowl, note the drooping despondency, the utter prostration of the delicate

and modest nature, deeming it a pity that the crystal vase was shattered, and the precious contents, his peculiar gift, suffered to flow wasting amid the sands of listless years? The convent rulers, including Savonarola, were keen to detect and utilize the talents of the brethren to the glory of the order.

Was it by mere chance that the young Raphael Sanzio in visiting Florence should have made inquiries for Fra Bartolommeo, and sought him out in his seclusion, with such interchange as imparting a knowledge of color, and receiving instruction in perspective?

There is no incident equally beautiful in the art of the time. Raphael, the genius about whom already shone the radiance that won all hearts, came to the monk's cell, like one of his own archangels, on outspread wings, smiting the darkness of moping inaction by his very presence, bidding the soul of the follower of Savonarola to arise out of the dust, for life was estimable, and the earth still full of countless blessings. Raphael was the swift messenger of art.

Savonarola may have visited the cell of his devoted follower in dreams, and the confessor of the convent still further guided awakening inclination.

In fear and joy, Fra Bartolommeo resumed his brush, refreshed by the intercourse with Raphael. Henceforth he must pray for wings and not crutches. His studio was opened within these precincts of St. Mark. He adopted the use of the jointed lay figure instead of draping clay models after the manner of Lorenzo di Credi. Color was to the painter what marble was to Michelangelo.

Fra Bartolommeo, with judgment matured and vision purified by long retirement, it would seem, studied the works of Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. He visited Venice, whither Baccio da Montelupo, the sculptor, had

fled after the death of Savonarola, and drew fresh inspiration from the splendors of the Venetian school.

Mariotto Albertinelli struggled to free himself from the weeds once more, coarsened and hardened by years of dissipation, and was admitted to partnership within these walls, as Benozzo Gozzoli was permitted to assist Fra Angelico.

The two friends executed magnificent work together, signed by their names interlaced; then ensued a final separation, — Albertinelli sinking out of sight, while Fra Bartolommeo climbed from excellence to perfection, gaining strength in light and shadow, method, contours, and beauty of composition. Like Michelangelo with the chisel, the monk was only contented when he held a brush in his hand.

What great works shed a glory over these convent walls! How the figures of Fra Bartolommeo stand forth, majestic, powerful, fully rounded into life because painted on the verge of the decline of religious painting! The Last Judgment on the wall of Santa Maria Nuova, the Vision of Saint Bernard, the Marriage of Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Mark in a niche, the Salvator Mundi, the Conception, with Saint Anna behind the Virgin, watching Christ and Saint John in the foreground, — these may have risen from the bonfire of the Vanities exalted, purged of any dross of the artist's youth. The head of Savonarola as Peter Martyr, with the wound in the skull, was painted in later life.

The monk went to Rome, and contracted malarial fever, which recurred each season until his death. He was sent to a convent of the Pian di Mugnone, as a country hospital, where he decorated the walls for pleasure and recreation. The Fra Paolino and the Suor Plautilla Nelli inherited his designs and artist's materials. Why did the Florentine school produce no great women painters?

The portrait of Savonarola hangs on the wall of the dark corridor.

We leave the cloister and the convent. The rain falls steadily in the Street of the Watermelon.

Fra Bartolommeo belongs not to the Dominican monastery of San Marco, but to the world. We find him at Lucca, in the Louvre, in the Hermitage of St. Petersburg as well as in the Uffizi, and amid the gilding and marble of the Pitti Palace.

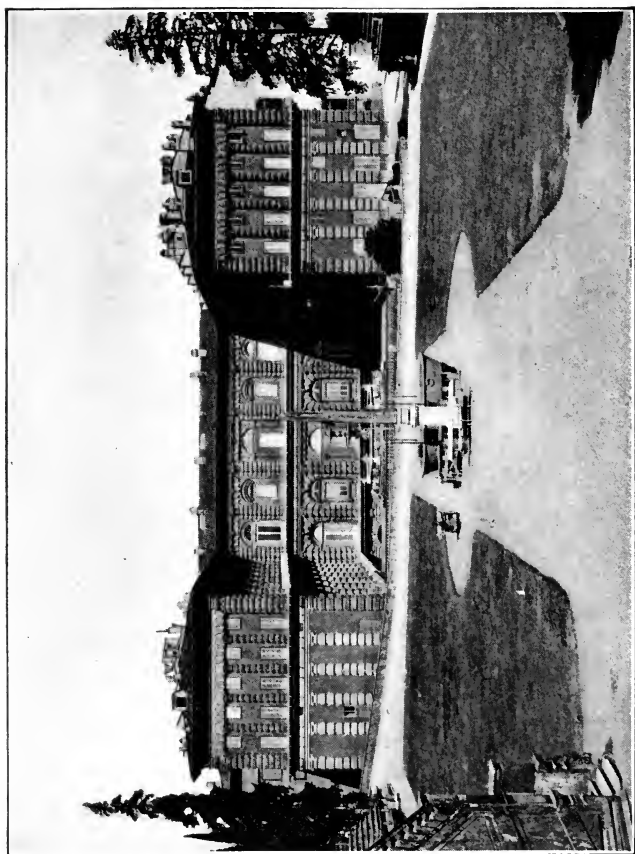
II. THE AUTUMN LEAF.

The autumn is fruitful; and the old *contadino* who uncovered his white head and crossed himself with a silent prayer in the Street of the Watermelon, on the spring noonday when the fireworks exploded on the car of Ceres in the *piazza*, must be rejoicing over the fulfilment of the promise in a rich vintage.

The little wicket of the palace farther down the street will acquire a fresh significance to the humble citizen, in the doling out of flasks of oil and wine. The dearest ambition of the Florentine since the day when Buonaccorso Pitti counted his mulberry-trees complacently has been to own a bit of land in the surrounding country, a farm, a villa, where he may watch his grapes and figs ripen.

"You were born already dressed, and with a villa for the summer season," says the envious friend, in one of the small chronicles of a local journal.

The shop of the vegetable-dealer opposite blooms with vivid red peppers, tomatoes, and yellow pumpkins. A basket of figs rests against the wall, just brought by a sun-bronzed kinsman in a little cart, full of straw, and drawn by a dusty, shaggy Maremma pony. The charcoal-merchant stands on the curb-stone, nibbling a bunch of





black grapes, with as contented an expression as the little faun of Michelangelo's Bacchus.

The vender of chestnut cake has paused beneath the Shrine of the Five Lamps, and places his pan on the three-legged stool to waylay customers of the delicacy redolent of oil.

The window-ledge is heaped with a friendly offering from the terrace slopes dear to Marsilio Ficino, in his day, — fragrant leaves, russet-red, brown flecked with gold-dust, and veined with crimson, marigolds, gladioli, poinsettia, and sun-flowers.

This scent of dried leaves, musky, aromatic, and delicate, is the pervading odor of the day permeating the luxuriant abundance of a harvest season when summer has lingered long into autumn.

The *feſta* is that of All Saints, and to-morrow will be the ensuing festival of the dead, All Souls. The two are usually combined in the visiting of graves. The crowds throng the height of San Miniato, still clothed with the scarlet Virginia creeper, to place their bouquets and garlands in and around the church. The little tapers flicker like golden stars on the pavement, amid the wreaths, and the country girls of another generation smile and chatter to their swains, out on a holiday with their parents and kindred, all without disturbing the repose of the young Cardinal of Portugal, lying in marble state near by.

The Protestant cemetery on the avenue wears the most lovely aspect of tranquillity, with the same scarlet vines entwining its closely thronging graves; and a handful of chrysanthemums have been placed on the tomb of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The town has not garlands of asphodel enough for the noble dead gathered here in a last sleep.

Leaves! Dead leaves perfume the warm air, and the

haze of heat broods over the Arno valley. Summer lies on the slopes of Monte Morello, the chestnut woods of Vallombrosa, and the distant range of Carrara peaks. Winter has forgotten the land.

To quit the window and roam abroad is to find the shops closed around the Duomo, and along the Via Cerretani. At the end of the latter thoroughfare the Church and Square of Santa Maria Novella are bathed in sunshine. The church becomes entwined with the existence even of foreigners dwelling in the vicinity; the square, whether deep in winter mud or choked with summer dust, is mean, ignoble, modern, the houses chiefly railway restaurants and hotels, alone redeemed by the hospital *loggia*, the obelisk, and the sacred edifice.

On the left is the Via de' Fossi, with the shop-windows full of mosaic, alabaster, and marble, haunted by the travellers of neighboring hotels, with the alert pick-pocket in attendance on the stranger.

Pause at a corner, and the narrow, irregular streets of the old Florence branch right and left, full of a shadowy suggestiveness which the Piazza Santa Maria Novella does not possess. Crooked byways abound, built to avoid the rude sweep of the wind, or following some line of Roman amphitheatre, with palace doors revealing glimpses of enclosed gardens, heavy casements projecting over the pavement, and an occasional little *piazza*, with a stone cross in the centre, marking a historical site. A boy and a girl stand with the red leaves of a vine-clad trellis above their heads, gazing down on the street. They laugh at the obstinacy of a gray donkey, laden with wine-casks, — youth, merry, careless, and indolent, blossoming within sombre walls. The Via de' Fossi, noisy and commonplace, leads to the Borgognissanti, where the throng surges toward the church on this day of All Souls.

An old man, seated at a table of the café, is eating an

ice, served in a tiny wine-glass, and of the consistency and color of pomatum, with the zest of a schoolboy.

The cat of the British pharmacy sits on a chair, gazing out of the door, superb, urbane, and of a silvery grayness of tint. A baby, toddling past on a holiday promenade, pauses and addresses the animal with infantile confidence. A timid little white dog peers in at the portal, with a deprecating mien; and the cat tolerates such canine intrusion with the dignified affability of large natures. Pussy's position in life is an assured one, while that of the little white dog clearly is not. These pass by, but the cat remains gazing across the street at the house where Amerigo Vespucci was born.

The Church of the Ognissanti, belonging to the order of the Minorites of Saint Salvator, is enjoying a *festa* in the calendar of the year.

Facing the Piazza Manin, with the yellow façade, the delicate Luca della Robbia lunette above the entrance, and the fine tower rising toward a blue or a stormy sky, the edifice is a temple of poverty, of the unsightly, mendicant type. The red brick tiles of the pavement are humid; a mouldy smell dominates the incense; the doors appear sunken; the marble tablets are worn. The greasy cloak of the blind man brushes the intruder; the crippled woman beseeches alms; a throng of dealers in tapers, rosaries, and pictures set in tinsel, proffer their wares. We do not penetrate the church farther than midway up the aisle.

On one wall is the fresco of Saint Jerome, by Domenico Ghirlandajo, and opposite the Saint Augustine of Sandro Botticelli. In the distance the main altar is ablaze with countless lights, which illuminate gold and silver tissues, crimson damask, lamps, and artificial flowers. The sound of chanting fills the ear, like the murmur of a sea-shell, remote, prolonged, conducive to revery.

Saint Jerome, full of a thoughtful dignity, rests his

head on his hand, as he writes at his desk. He is a calm and majestic embodiment of age, with silvery hair and beard, and possibly is in the act of putting the finishing touches to the "Vulgate" or the "Commentaries on the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament."

Saint Augustine holds the ink-horn and pen in his left hand, while the right, with the articulation of the finger-joints peculiar to the artist, is raised to his breast. The head, with closely curling beard and energetic features, is lifted as if to receive inspiration. Do not the eyes of the scholar reveal the kindling of imagination over the City of God ("De Civitate Dei"), or the emotion of the heart rising to be poured forth in the "Confessions"? The page is open before him, on which to inscribe, at least, vigorous reasoning on original sin.

These two fine figures, painted in rivalry by two great artists, absorb all our interest in the Church of the Ognissanti. Gradually Saint Augustine asserts the right to undivided observation.

Sandro Botticelli was one of the group of painters who stood near Savonarola in life and death. Born in Florence about the year 1440, he was the youngest son of Mariano Filepepi, and pupil of Filippo Lippi. Patronized by Sixtus IV. and Pius IV., he painted in the Sistine Chapel those frescos replete with delicacy of design and beauty of imagination which were overpowered by Michelangelo's creation. Of all the Savonarola artists he resembles the most closely the fallen leaf, smitten from the branch by the storm of martyrdom. Michelangelo received in youth the vivid and powerful images of inspiration from the lips of the preacher, portrayed in the labors of maturity. Fra Bartolommeo, also young, shrank into a monk's cell, crushed and appalled by the fate of his leader, and the violence of man, until such time as his bruised spirit was healed and refreshed to emerge and expand in untried fields

of creative excellence. Sandro Botticelli, already mature, dropped his brush forever, the vital spark extinguished.

He was apprenticed to a goldsmith, but early evinced a preference for painting. Illustrating the art of the fifteenth century, when the school of Fra Angelico had declined, and Filippo Lippi had modified the religious, conventional feeling, and extended the practice of filling large wall spaces with designs in tempera, Botticelli enjoyed the fruits of his own labors, and is reputed to have profited by the failures of other men, yielding much to the influence of pictorial and plastic science. In 1480 he painted the Saint Augustine in fresco for the Ognissanti.

We have only slight details of the man, but these are varied and fascinating, like his work. Contemporaries designated him as fanciful, vehement, passionate, and religious. The chain of personality has few links. In the Brancacci Chapel of the Church of the Carmine The Martyrdom of Saint Peter, by Filippino Lippi, has on the right the portrait of a man in profile, with a prominent nose, deep-set eyes, and a heaviness of jaw. He wears a red mantle, green hose, and a purple cap on flowing locks. This is said to be the portrait of Sandro Botticelli.

His work remains,—the curious allegory of Spring; the Judith, moving lightly with triumphant step, followed by her handmaiden, carrying the head of Holofernes in a sack; the Fortitude, the round pictures, reminding one of the medallions in sculpture of Donatello and Desiderio da Settignano.

The sad faces of the Madonna, and the meditative expression of the Christ Child, which form so marked a characteristic of the painter, were attributed to the influence of Savonarola and a love of roses due to a remembrance of the cloister garden of St. Mark. The pictures were painted before the sway of Savonarola began; while Botticelli, as a Florentine, must have imbibed a love of the

rose with his first breath. The flower still blooms in long sprays of creamy, rich blossoms on the chrome-tinted walls of convent gardens, borders the Etruscan heights of Fiesole in wild luxuriance, or unfolds deep, velvety petals on terraces. The association, however erroneous, lends a new charm to his works. May not the pensive and mourning Madonnas rather foreshadow his own fate, and the development of the phase of character of abandoning everything when Savonarola was burned at the stake?

Botticelli gave his sketches to the pyre of the Vanities, and dropped his brush forever, after the execution of the reformer. The concluding item of his career is brief. He would have starved in old age, but for the support of the Medici.

In the Church of the Ognissanti the incense rises in clouds about the altars, the tapers twinkle, and the draperies glisten in folds of silver, gold, and crimson. The chanting of voices mingles and recedes like the murmur of a sea-shell. Saint Augustine confronts Saint Jerome in the fresco of the wall.

Outside the crowd passes along the Arno bank, or seeks the cemeteries to deck the graves of the dead. The silvery mists of the valley rise along the slope of hills. The atmosphere is full of the scents of aromatic plants, dry twigs, bitter and balmy herbs, fruit. The day is languorous in the very fulness of life, and yet with that veil of sadness, the autumn mist, the light in the eyes of Botticelli's Madonnas over everything. The churches are only tombs, so many mortuary chapels, hung with funeral wreaths, at this season.

“Seek not, Leuconoë ('t is sinful), to explore
What term of life for thee or me may be in store,
Nor tempt Chaldean mysteries! wiser far, whate'er
Our future fate may send, with cheerful mind to bear,
Whether long years be ours, or this may be the last.”

In the window the marigolds star the dusky vines that crumble at a touch. How many years ago the hand of Botticelli sank in nerveless inaction, the spirit of the artist broken by the execution of one he deemed a saint among men! How vital the influence of Savonarola! How generous the soul of Botticelli! The seasons recur to the Flower City just the same.

“Leaves! little leaves! thy children, thy flatterers, thine enemies! Leaves in the wind! For all these, and the like of them, are born in the springtime; and soon a wind scatters them, and thereafter the wood peopleth itself again with another generation of leaves.”

III. THE RESPECTED CITIZEN.

There is nothing new under the sun.

The prolonged note of a bugle resounds in the Street of the Watermelon in the sultry stillness of early September. A soldier pauses to blow the note, and a responsive stir, a thrill of agitation, is immediately perceptible. Windows are opened, and faces grown suddenly pale look out; people gather in the doors and at the corners; the children ask questions. The dealer in books stands on his threshold and makes some remark to the antiquity-merchant over the way. The countenance of the charcoal-vender is as nearly serious as possible, and his felt hat is placed firmly on his head, instead of being tilted over one ear, in honor of the occasion, although no public calamity can render his *nez retroussé* other than humorous and inconsequent. The rosy vegetable-woman wipes her eyes furtively, waiting in her shop with some garments of a nondescript character over her arm.

The cats, with one accord, have withdrawn to shelf and ledge, where they wash their faces with velvet paws, or stare stonily at a scene which does not concern them.

The cat is seldom in the foremost rank of sympathetic curiosity with the affairs of humanity, as is the faithful dog.

The peal of the bugle is repeated; then the sound of heavy wheels becomes audible; and a large van approaches. The vehicle is neither the *carroccio* of war, painted vermilion, drawn by bullocks decked with scarlet trappings, carrying the standard of the town, accompanied by the great bell, nor the car commemorative of the Feast of Saint John, when a man dressed like the Baptist stopped before a certain house for bread, wine, and confectionery to be lowered from a window, but a wagon to receive gifts for those stricken with cholera at Spezia or Naples. The scene is one which the most phlegmatic spectator will scarcely forget, for the grim phantom of pestilence, advancing from India and Egypt, seems about to strike the fair Flower City as well.

The bugle peals; the heavy wheels rumble; and the most heterogeneous articles are showered down from the windows into the van, — shawls, stockings, shoes, children's raiment, and copper coin to be collected by attendants in tin cups. Household stores and bedding are given below. Here the porter in the livery of a palace presents iron beds and mattresses in the name of his master, together with piles of linen from the hoards, lavender-scented, of the wealthy household. There a poor widow, thin and shabby in attire, pauses on the curbstone, sobbing with hysterical emotion, slips the gold ring from her finger, and adds it to the store. The pedler of cheap shoes takes the coat from his own back, and throws it after the rest. The gentlemen in the vehicle uncover their heads courteously, and bow their acknowledgments of these manifestations of sympathy. Then the heavy wheels, preceded by the soldier-herald and the attendant crowd, pass on, the Street of the Watermelon having played its part in the

quest of benevolence. The inmate of the palace has given of his inherited abundance; the widow has cast in her ring, which must soon have gone to the pawnbroker for household bread; the pedler will lack a coat when winter comes. The varied elements of the population have tasted of a public excitement, theatrical in demonstration, yet there can be no doubt of the very great kindness and charity of the Italians of all classes to poverty and distress wherever existing.

The quest of benevolence has passed on, but seems to have left a danger-signal on all faces. The widow, clasping her thin hands to her breast with a dramatic gesture, gives utterance to the dread of her neighbors: "Who knows how soon we shall need help?"

The incident and the circumstances bring the modern inmate of the window in close contact with the past. There is nothing new under the sun. To read the introduction of the "*Decameron*" is to have the regulations issued by the ministry of Rome to-day, and enforced by the municipal authorities of the different cities, in precise, sanitary formula, with the addition of soup kitchens possibly, and the opening of aqueducts of fresh water. "Establish *lazzaretti* outside the gates; fumigate and suspect all strangers arriving from other places; have a care of the absolute cleanliness of the town; observe sobriety of life." Thus reads the old "*Decameron*;" and the Plague, most baleful of foes, swept down on the Arno bank, and slew its thousands with a breath.

The door of the Academy of Fine Arts is open. Let us enter, and forget the quest of benevolence. The bitter cold of winter has not yet penetrated the interior; and the old copyist whose life has been spent reproducing the company of the Blessed in detached groups, on little panels, of Fra Angelico's Last Judgment, at the end of the large hall, does not need to pause in his mechanical

labors to warm benumbed fingers at the brazier. The old copyist resembles the artist we seek. The September warmth of mellow tones penetrating the opposite windows seems to glorify the range of stately master-pieces on the wall; the gilded trappings of Gentile da Fabriano sparkle; the Madonna of Filippo Lippi smiles; the angels of Botticelli move in the rhythmical measure of an aerial dance; the Mother of Sorrows, in tearless grief, holds her dead son in her embrace, by Perugino.

The Nativity of Lorenzo di Credi finds here a place. The work reveals the low tone in flesh coloring, the careful management of draperies, the minuteness of landscape, peculiar to the painter. The Virgin, with the usual angelic attendants and the shepherds, is sweet in simplicity, while the Baptist is suggestive of Bernardino Luini, and the Joseph Peruginesque in treatment.

Lorenzo di Credi was born in 1459 in the house of his grandfather, Oderigo di Credi, whose diary of quaint items concerning the sale of oil, dealings with farmers, and the price of household goods has been preserved in the Riccardiana Library, as a specimen of the fifteenth-century manners.

The father was a goldsmith by trade, and when he died, the mother, Monna Lisa, placed the boy with Verrocchio, the sculptor, painter, and scientific draughtsman, who conducted the education of Leonardo da Vinci and Perugino as well.

Under Verrocchio, Lorenzo di Credi went through a course of training, copying the sketches of Leonardo da Vinci with so much patience and industry as to render it difficult to discern the original design. Lacking the genius and imagination of Da Vinci and the Umbrian softness of Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi remained an easel painter, owing to his peculiar laboriousness of treatment of oil medium. Anxious to obtain a pure enamel of color,

he ground earths to powder, distilled his own oils, and mixed at least thirty shades of various tints on his palette before using. His servants were forbidden to raise dust in the studio. He polished surfaces to the smoothness of enamel, and scarcely altered them by means of a thin glazing. Vasari preserved the drawings of Credi, which were made from clay models with linen wetted to form draperies, before Fra Bartolommeo adopted the lay figure.

Studying closely the method of Leonardo da Vinci, Credi painted the round picture of the Madonna sent to the King of Spain. He excelled in portraiture, the heads of Perugino and Verrocchio being from his brush, as well as the study of Girolamo Benivieni sometimes ascribed to Da Vinci. So much did his careful work resemble the German and Flemish schools at times that the picture of a man with black hair and a black headgear has been designated as Martin Luther, by Holbein. He designed a Saint Bartholomew in a pilaster of Or San Michele, made the altar of Saint Joseph in the Duomo, and the angel Michael, worked for the Church of the Servi at Florence, and for that of Saint Augustine at Montepulciano. He frequently repaired and restored pictures, — in 1501, an altar of Fra Angelico at San Domenico; in 1508, he colored a crucifix of Benedetto da Majano, and retouched the equestrian statues of Sir John Hawkwood and Nicholas of Tolentino in the Duomo.

He remained, with all his painstaking zeal, cold, formal, and ineffective in art. Following greater lights, he adopted the method and missed the substance. He resembled authors whose fastidious self-consciousness exacts perfection of diction and style in pages which lack the pith of substantial thought, or the verse-maker, who polishes his lines in the belief that he is a poet. Was Lorenzo di Credi over-educated by Verrocchio? Left to

untrained effort, would he have excelled? Here is one of the curious problems of life.

He held the most honorable positions in his native city. He was ever the respected citizen. Verrocchio, his master and friend, made him the executor of his will, with the legacy of marbles and artistic properties at Venice and Florence, with an interest in the completion of the Colleoni statue in the former city. He was a witness to Cronaca's will.

In public assemblage he was deputed to pass judgment with Perugino on the plans for the façade of the Duomo, the placing of the lantern, the site for Michelangelo's David, or to appraise the value of the work of Ridolfo Ghirlandajo in the chapel of the Signoria of the Palazzo Vecchio, a statue of an Apostle by Baccio Bandinelli, the mosaic of Saint Zenobius. He retired to the convent of Santa Maria Novella, and died at the age of seventy years, leaving many unfinished works.

Such is the brief record of a man whose life and associations inspire more interest than his art.

Lorenzo di Credi was of a character honest, upright, and deeply imbued with the piety which made of him one of the warmest adherents of Savonarola. The melancholy expression frequently discoverable in his saints has been ascribed to the same source as the mysterious charm of Botticelli's Madonnas and the clinging roses. How many times Lorenzo di Credi must have traversed the Street of the Watermelon, between the convent of San Marco and the Duomo, to hang upon the inspired words of Savonarola! The heart of a man of such a temperament must have been harrowed by the anguish, the obloquy, and ridicule which befell the followers of the preacher. In the storm he did not flee into exile, maddened by persecution, but remained in his native city. He had carried all his drawings not savoring of the purest religious elements to

cast on the fire of the Vanities; other sacrifices he may have made to the cause he had espoused, yet he represents the conservative element in the band of remarkable men not doomed to madness or despair by the cruel fate of Savonarola. Had the nature which exacted the grinding of the earths to powder, and the mingling of at least thirty colors on the palette before beginning to paint, anything to do with this prudence and moderation?

The great genius of Fra Bartolommeo shrank, crushed, wellnigh annihilated, into the monk's cell; the hand of the mature Botticelli drooped nerveless to the grave; Lorenzo di Credi, the type of a respected citizen, held his place, consulted on public affairs of interest, the erection of the David on a suitable site, the value of certain mosaics, the completion of the cathedral façade.

At this distance of time, the fury of passion calmed, the heat of partisan dispute over, the morbid sensitiveness of souls sickened by violent deeds healed, the temperance, patience, and industry of Lorenzo di Credi inspire profound admiration. As an artist he may have been narrow, conventional, harsh, but as a man he was in advance of his day.

CHAPTER XII

IN A CHURCH NICHE.

A LEAF of paper lies on the table within the disk of light from a shaded lamp. On this sheet is outlined the face, in profile, of an elderly man, full of character, passion, and a trace of visionary wildness in the expression. The eye is prominent, the nose curved, brow and cheek hollowed and deeply lined, the hair and beard worn long, while the curious cap on the head enhances the singularity of the whole physiognomy. Was he a magician dealing with Black Art, a philosopher, a poet?

This is the face of Baccio da Montelupo.

Extinguish the lamp, and the moonbeams slant through the window, inviting the inmate abroad to enjoy the witchery of the light on the town. The lamps of the opposite shrine sparkle. The moon that shines on Italy is without seasons. The midsummer sky may have the beryl tinge of a crystal clearness, gained from the sweep of a recent *tramontana* wind, or the night of midwinter be rendered resplendent by a mellow ray, elsewhere associated with autumn warmth.

The Street of the Watermelon is white as with a celestial radiance, and each of the five lamps of the Tabernacle casts a separate, sharply defined shadow on the wall.

The Piazza of the Duomo is paved with silver, and, one by one, the statues of the new façade become detached from snowy column, portico, and pinnacle, like the trans-



figured saints of a vision, while the campanile melts to soft, opalescent tints.

The intense brilliancy wearies and pains the eye with the broad effulgence of unvarying splendor, as the silence of the spot awes the spirit. The full moon sleeping on the surface of the Mediterranean, or lending her charm to the midnight revelry of music, laughter, and drifting boat at Venice, has a different aspect. Here all is cold, grave, and harmonious. Shadows, weird and fantastic, play on the Via Calzajuoli beyond. The movement of day is over, and the shops closed.

A shaft of light, vivid, tremulous, and occasionally obscured by a passing cloud, shines on the Church of Or San Michele. The Shrine of Orcagna is safe in the guardianship of all those figures in the niches. The folds of bronze draperies acquire a golden lustre in the moonlight; the faces express an earnestness of mute watchfulness; and the angelic heads of Luca della Robbia in the medallions above, bathed in the radiance of upper air, appear to lean forth to look down and note if the sentinels sleep at their post.

Saint Luke holds his open book; Christ confronts Thomas; the Baptist shines in a mist of dancing beams; and Saint George grasps his shield beneath his Gothic canopy. In full light stands Saint John the Evangelist, of Baccio da Montelupo.

What manner of man was the magician in the odd cap? Considered in close proximity with the sober and industrious Lorenzo di Credi, this eccentric follower of Savonarola offers the most remarkable contrast. From the first, the owner of that thoughtful and projecting brow, the beaked nose, and hollowed cheek, did not resemble his fellows, and was required to work out his own salvation.

Bartolommeo Sinibaldi da Montelupo was born in 1445, and spent his early years in dissipation, ignorant and

indifferent to all matters of art. How did the scales fall from his eyes? When did the Ideal reveal herself in the sanctuary of her temple to the astonished and contrite Sinibaldi? He reformed his course, abandoned pleasure, and set himself, in good part, to follow younger men. Here was no serving in the studio of a master in boyhood, as did Fra Bartolommeo and Andrea del Sarto, no training with the goldsmith of Ghiberti, or Luca della Robbia. Montelupo had to repair all deficiencies of early idleness as best he could, and make up in tardy ardor for youthful frivolity.

His contemporaries accorded him praise for the execution of much good work, achieved with all the odds heavily against him in so cultivated a field as the Florentine school. He gave himself to art with the same energy which had characterized his earlier pursuit of pleasure, and a later vehement partisanship of Savonarola, of whom he was a devoted champion.

The path of life was full of thorns for Baccio da Montelupo. The religious zeal of such a nature was not likely to remain hidden, and it burst forth in a fashion at the moment of Savonarola's martyrdom, and burned with a fervor of generous indignation afterward, calculated to excite the animosity of all enemies of the reformer and his cause. Montelupo suffered persecution, mockery, and injury to such an extent that he was forced to flee into exile, as Dante had fled, leaving a wife and children in poverty. He went to Venice, where he sculptured the figure of Mars on the monument of Benedetto Pesaro, Admiral of the Republic, who died at Corfu in 1503. Fra Bartolommeo visited his friend at Venice, the monk discovering fresh inspiration in the coloring of the school, the sculptor worn in the struggle with necessity.

The strange glimpse is given us of an event in his career which was worthy material for the dramatist.

Montelupo sought Bologna, lodged with a canon of the Cathedral, and began to model the Twelve Apostles in *rilievo*. He sorely needed the money these designs would bring, to send to his family.

The canon coveted the statues to present to Giovanni Bentivoglio, the lord of Bologna, from whom he hoped to obtain a government appointment for a brother. He offered his tenant half of the sum demanded, and Montelupo refused, until, harried with toil and anxiety, he fell ill of a fever. Then the wicked host decided to obtain the prize without payment, by mixing a slow poison in the fever draught administered to the helpless patient.

The sculptor in his extremity prayed to Savonarola to aid him. The reformer appeared to him, having a halo around his head. He bade the sick man arise and seek the house of a certain Camillo della Siepe, where he would recover.

Montelupo obeyed, escaped from his persecutor and his fever draughts, and recovered. The sculptor believed in this miraculous intervention, and used to recount the history in old age.

He executed crucifixes in wood for the monks of St. Mark, St. Peter's Maggiore, and the Badia of Arezzo, as well as many ornaments for the houses of citizens. He carved a monument for the sepulchre of the Bishop Silvestro de' Gigli at Lucca, which was afterward sold to a stone-cutter making repairs. His son, Raffaello, began to work in clay, wax, and bronze in youth, and made a good reputation.

Baccio da Montelupo died at Lucca, at the age of eighty-eight years; and the town did him honor. The man rather than his works interests us.

A cloud passes over the moon, and the outline of the Church of Or San Michele, the square form of the original corn market, becomes dim.

In the rear all those picturesque houses, arched passages,

and flights of steps leading to the Old Market, worthy of the etcher's skill, are black, impenetrable, tortuous, in the winding labyrinths used for centuries. Desertion broods over the former teeming centre of life. The small windows shed no light on adjacent flying buttress, tower, and sculptured escutcheon. The spirit of darkness reigns in John of Bologna's devil, which still adorns the corner of the Vecchietti mansion. The silence is almost palpable. No echo is audible of the fine voice of Burchiello, the barber, trolling forth a challenge to other wits to engage in warfare, from the threshold of his shop, frequented by the great men of his time. Gone are the stalls beneath the gabled roofs, with their tawny awnings, sheltering salad, cabbages, capsicum, pomegranate, and yellow mushrooms from the Apennines. The kingdom of beans, haricot, lupin, and lentil is wofully empty. The casserole of the vender no longer fries delicately, in bubbling oil, golden *polenta*, melon-flowers, livers, artichoke, and bits of fennel. The spit of the professional roaster no longer revolves with trussed fowl, larks, and thrushes before the wide chimney of the cook-shop of four centuries, in a dark interior resplendent with majolica and polished copper. The fruit of the sea—sole, tunny, sardine, lobster, shrimp, and sepia, with widespread tentacles—must be sought elsewhere than in the fish-market built by Cosimo I. All these have been swept away to larger quarters. In vain the modern *chef* would haunt the spot where he was wont to select turkeys and capons as plump as the canons of the Cathedral, to meditate on fresh artistic combinations, — whether *Timballe à la Medici*, or a pasty of game, the result would be a Barmecidal banquet. The Attic salt of other generations lacks savor; the clamor of voices is forever hushed.

“Are men poor?”

Behold them ragged, sick, lame, halt, and blind!

Do they use speech? Ay; street terms, market-phrases.”

Baccio da Montelupo, in his odd cap, seems to flee from the rabble of his enemies in the darkness of the Ghetto.

The moon shines once more; and the statues in the niches of the church watch about Orcagna's Tabernacle, while the Luca della Robbia angels in the upper space lean forth to note if the sentinels sleep at their post.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORY-TELLER.

AND Cronaca ceased from story-telling. The personality of Cronaca possesses originality and freshness. He formed a most characteristic element of the common-wealth, yet we only obtain glimpses of him here and there, traits of warm human nature flashing into brightness and vanishing in the crowd again, as his own bits of architecture and marble work were inserted, mosaic-wise, in the labors of other men.

The portrait head in old volumes reveals the man: the face is large and closely shaven, the eyes widely opened and full of animation, the hair swept back carelessly, the mobile lips about to speak, the whole physiognomy betraying frankness and confidence.

Such was the story-teller, whose vein of varied loquacity was paralyzed, whose volatile brain became clouded, darkened by the awful shock of Savonarola's death. His history seems to be comprised in this summary:—

Simone del Pollajuolo, called Il Cronaca, was the son of Tommaso d'Antonio Pollajuolo, and born on the 30th of October, 1457. In his early youth he ran away from Florence, either for some boyish misdemeanor, or actuated by an ardent desire to see the world for himself. The world meant Rome to the artist, as well as the prince and statesman. Cronaca, in whom a love of architecture had already developed, so much admired the buildings of the Eternal City that he took the measure of many edifices.

Returning to Florence, he ever afterward recounted the marvels beheld at Rome and elsewhere in his travels, and his fellow-citizens christened him "the chronicler," with that aptitude for nicknames for which they have ever been celebrated.

Times are sadly changed. The modern Cronaca is deemed a bore, and his most innocent allusion to famous lands a distinct injury and offence to his stay-at-home friends. It was otherwise in the old Florence. Cronaca was much esteemed for the accuracy of his dates and descriptions; and the citizens listened with interest to his voluble speech, having no uneasy self-consciousness and vanity to be disturbed by his superior knowledge.

He made the model of the cortile, and the exterior ornaments with the Corinthian cornice of the Strozzi Palace, begun by Benedetto da Majano. Giovanbattista Strozzi wrote of Cronaca:—

*"Vivo, mille anni e mille ancora,
Mercé di vive miei palazzi e temps;
Bella Roma, vivrà l'alma mia Flora."*

Cronaca further designed the Franciscan church of San Miniato, and finished the dome of cupola of the sacristy of Santo Spirito. The appointments held by him have a certain quaintness of the time. He was made master stone-cutter in 1489, then elected Capomaestro of the Duomo, with commission to have sawed the marbles left in the Opera del Duomo, and those from the house of Lorenzo the Magnificent, as well as to construct new altars and steps. As one of the workers in the temple Cronaca has this interest: In 1499 he was ordered to strengthen the door of the cathedral opposite the Street of the Watermelon with an additional pilaster and porch, as it threatened to fall. In 1500 he repaired the vast pavement of the church, and constructed seats of wood,

and later one of the chapels of the tribune, with a cornice of yellow Siena stone. He was even required to prepare a map of the wooded lands in the Casentino and the Romagna owned by the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, designing their form and giving their respective names to rivers and mountains.

He was present at the act ordering of Michelangelo twelve apostles for the Duomo. Called to deliberate on the suitable placing of the statue of David, he conducted it to the Piazza Signoria, where it stood for so many centuries. Cronaca was one of Savonarola's devoted disciples. When the prior attained the influence of temporal power which made him virtually the head of the city, and desired to construct a chamber for the Grand Council worthy of ruling a renovated commonwealth, Cronaca was employed. We behold Savonarola consulting Giuliano di San Gallo, Baccio d'Agnolo, and Cronaca, on the important project. We behold Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo designing their famous cartoons for the adornment of the walls. We behold Cronaca at his best striving to build with the utmost despatch and to rival in magnificence rooms in the Roman palaces, the Vatican under Pius II. and Innocent VIII., the castle at Naples, the royal residences of Milan, Urbino, Venice, and Padua.

Cronaca adopted the cause of Savonarola with absolute frenzy of enthusiasm, perhaps undermining to reason. He made a will, leaving the sum of two hundred and thirty florins to his wife, Madonna Tita de Rosselli, and his children, and expressed a wish to be buried in the Church of San Ambrogio. In the spring evening Cronaca glances in at the Florence Window, and beckons to us. Here is no grim phantom leading the way to sepulchral vault, but a friendly shade, linking the arm through that of the visitor, and imparting histories as he guides the footsteps to the Piazza Signoria.

The Palazzo Vecchio wears a most stately aspect; banners float from the cornice; and the casements of the Sala del Cinque-Cento are ablaze with light. A historical ball is being held in the great council-chamber, in the presence of the sovereigns. Society is fond of assuming the garb of its ancestors, following the example of the German court.

Florence has just enjoyed a tournament in addition. Tournaments have in no city a more fitting setting. That of to-day may furnish a link with those of the past. When Leopold I., the beneficent grand-duke whose rule consisted of twenty-five years of reform for Tuscany, received Count Orloff with the Russian fleet at Leghorn, a Roman amphitheatre was erected on the Square of Santa Croce, having four entrances adorned with statues, draperies, and a floral balustrade. The pageant consisted of the defeat of Cyrus by Tomyris, Queen of the Massagetæ. The two hostile armies entered by opposite gates, the king on his barbed steed with hoofs of gold, supported by his two sons in Persian magnificence, and followed by six companies with spears, slings, and gilded arrows, their movements excited by warlike music. The queen stood under a pavilion of gold. The king, dismounting, waited in a tent of scarlet and silver until the challenge to single combat was given and his overthrow ensued, when the triumphant queen departed in a chariot drawn by four horses, with her captive lying at her feet.

Lorenzo the Magnificent remains ever the hero of the tournament, when in the same Square of Santa Croce he won the prize of a silver helmet, surmounted by the figure of Mars, by his prowess as a knight, mounted on a horse with housings of red and white velvet wrought with pearls, his surcoat with a shoulder-piece embroidered in fresh and withered roses, a velvet cap bordered with pearls and feathers set with diamonds and rubies. His shield had a

diamond set in the centre, of the value of two thousand ducats, and he bore the famous device, "Le Temps revient," which was the watchword of the Renaissance. Both rulers have passed away, but Florence recalls them in her spring festivals.

The light is shed abroad from the casements of the great *sala* of the old palace. The glimpses we obtain of the interior, the historical dames in damask, brocade, and gold embroideries of Milan, Genoa, or Lucca, the cavaliers in doublets and silken hose, the flowers, the fresco of a space of wall, resemble the oblique, illuminated points we have of Cronaca's life.

The moments lengthen to hours imperceptibly; the royal guests return to the Pitti Palace by the covered passage connecting the two buildings; the wax candles drip in the chandeliers; the living forms depart. Silence, the soft, impalpable hush before the dawn of another day, sinks on the city, like the wide sweep of wings.

The friendly shade at our side has vanished, like a wraith of the night. Cronaca has forever ceased from story-telling.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM THE LABORATORY OF A PRINCE.

THE shop of the dealer in *bric-à-brac* is open on a winter day. The richly blended colors of the objects exposed for sale in the show-window — the strips of crimson and yellow damask, the strings of coral and amber beads, the Venetian glass and majolica — afford a pleasant contrast with the uniform grayness of cold out-of-doors.

January holds the Street of the Watermelon in an iron grasp. The north wind sweeps down from the Fiesole heights to lie in wait with sudden, treacherous gusts in the adjacent Square of the Duomo, ever a favorite haunt of Boreas; and the sun slants in a transient and pallid gleam, touching the surface of the houses without penetrating the frosty chambers. The sky is of a leaden tint; and a few stray flakes of snow like stars fall from time to time.

The antiquity-merchant stands at his door, slowly rubbing together his benumbed fingers; and his cat pauses beside him. Master and pet singularly resemble each other. Swift instinct of prejudice decides that if ever there was a cat of a man he is the antiquarian. He wears a heavy, shabby cloak, which must have been an heirloom of warmth in his family, the collar bordered with a yellowish fur like the cat's tawny coat. His beard and hair are of a yellowish-gray tint, his eye sly and furtive, his smile

satirical even when his manner is the most urbane. Altogether he is feline, sharing secrets with his cat, and having many a laugh with this congenial companion in the depths of the shop over the spoiling of the Philistines.

In the shop-window this morning there is a black box. The merchant, after polishing the surface on his sleeve, has just placed it beside a brass dish. The box excites a degree of curiosity which the majolica, the amber, and the ivory carvings fail to arouse.

We quit the Florence Window and emerge on the street. The rosy vegetable-woman holds a little *scaldino*, with her hands wrapped in her apron. The charcoal-merchant, indifferent to weather, is in his shirt-sleeves, as usual. The antiquity-dealer takes a small silver box from one of the capacious pockets of his coat, and selects a copious pinch of snuff, as we approach. The cat arches his back and waves a plummy tail in the air with an aspect of blandness which plainly says, "Enter! Strictest integrity of dealing will be found here."

The black box in the case, what is it? The merchant finishes his pinch of snuff with deliberation, reaches a long arm dexterously among the swinging copper lamps and festoons of lace, and presents the object of interest for closer inspection. A piece of black marble, alike on all sides, without hinge, lock, or opening of any sort, we turn it over helplessly and without result.

The antiquity-merchant enjoys the mystification, his usual satirical smile deepening the wrinkles of his dry cheeks and temples. He would serve as a model for the Dutch school at the moment.

The cat enjoys the mystification, and has sprung on a carved table at the master's elbow, where the animal poises himself deftly and gracefully amid the fragile china, purring with an interrogative note: "You believed yourself

to be clever enough to open the box, did you? You fancied you were to solve our secrets at a glance."

The bit of black marble is not a box, after all, but only a specimen of stone, a paper-weight, perhaps.

The merchant shakes his head. It is a box, only one must know how to open the lid. He reflects, and then with skilful manipulation in his hands one side slides back, another discloses the joint of a third, and an open receptacle is uncovered. The interior is smooth and empty.

"A poison-box, — period of the Medici," the merchant explains.

"Which Medici?"

He shrugs his shoulders.

"Eh! Cosimo I., of course."

The trap is artfully baited, and the stranger caught. Cosimo I. is the object of a rich, varied, and even terrible interest. He was, in our estimation, a man of porphyry. Surely some trace of a whitish powder is still visible in the box! Imagination is kindled. The sinister relic is purchased on the spot. The merchant and the cat watch the departure of the purchaser with an inscrutable expression. The man smooths his yellow beard with his hand. Puss washes his whiskers with one paw, seated on the threshold. Leaving the Street of the Watermelon, braving the gust of the Piazza del Duomo, and following the Via Cerretani to the Via Rondinelli, the fine thoroughfare of the Via Tornabuoni is gained.

A winter crispness and animation pervades the town. Poverty is nipped with cold and hunger; while the larder of the rich is filled with turkeys, hams, capons, and wild boar's head from the Maremma, served with kernels of the pine-cone and *agra-dolce* sauce. Groups of travellers, red guidebook in hand, gather about the fine shops, stocked with jewelry, millinery, bronzes, and modern *articles de*

Paris. Sealskin, sable, and silvery fox-fur appear in a brief season.

Via Tornabuoni of many memories! The name is one of blessed association in the masculine estimation, for nearly every man and boy smokes cigar, pipe, or cigarette. Niccolò Tornabuoni, Bishop of San Sepolcro, introduced tobacco into Tuscany in 1560, and the fragrant weed was long known as Erba Tornabuoni.

In the curve of street two points of color attract the eye. The first is the corner of the Strozzi Palace, blooming with flowers even in the cold air, — begonia, heath, snowdrop, primula, ranged beneath the Fanale of filagree iron-work wrought by brusque Niccolò Caparra, who bade the Medici wait until earlier customers were served. The second is the statue of Justice on the summit of the column in the Piazza Santa Trinità beyond.

The Justice poises her scales above the town. How many associations become linked with this beautiful statue during a residence of even a few years in Florence! The crowd ebbs and flows along the thoroughfare, crosses the Trinità Bridge, or sweeps around the corner of the Arno, and still Justice stands aloft judging the town. The sunshine, whether morning ray or glowing western light, loves to seek the porphyry figure, and pour a flood of radiance on the red surface with a glory all its own. The tones are warm even in cloudy weather; rain polishes the folds of the flying mantle and the lustrous form with a fresh splendor. The lines of parapet of adjacent mediæval palaces encircle the column. On one side the ancient Borgo degli Apostoli wends to the left in cool shadow of massive walls.

Opposite is the Church of the Trinity, an edifice attributed to the ninth century, and modified in the sixteenth century, with a façade designed by Bernardo Buontalenti. Churches, like the human physiognomy, either attract or repel. The Trinity is **eminently**



friendly and interesting in aspect. Above the main entrance is the relief of the Godhead. The figures of saints on the bronze doors are always dust-laden. Saint Alexis, in the garb of a pilgrim, occupies a niche on one side. These very portals are suggestive of a time when timid Christians, ceasing to believe that the millennium was at hand, began to cast church doors in metal, or carve them in wood, illustrative of subjects typical of events in the Old Testament. Nave and aisles extend within, with a transept and chapels; above the main altar is the crucifix that bowed the head to Saint John Gualberto on the height of San Miniato, in token of approval for his having spared the murderer of his brother, instead of slaying him. The miraculous work, canvas on a wooden frame, was brought from San Miniato in state, borne under a canopy carried by eight senators, and followed by nobles and religious orders to the present location, and is uncovered on Good Friday. A tumult of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, which occurred in 1257, invaded this sanctuary, and was only quelled by the priest taking the pyx and wafer from the altar to confront the intruders.

On the winter noonday the aisles are being draped in black for the funeral of a foreign woman, whose wish to be buried in a robe of sackcloth, with the emblem of the crown of thorns, has been fulfilled, while her wealth founds religious institutions elsewhere.

Generations have been born, lived their appointed span, and died, while Justice has gathered the warmth of the Italian sunset on her porphyry robe. Nor should the significance of her first erection be overlooked.

The pillar from the Baths of Caracalla, or Terme of Antoninus, was given to the Duke Cosimo I. by Pope Paul IV., and arriving in the month of December, 1563, was erected in July, 1565. The statue, the work of Francesco Ferrucci, known as Cecco del Tadda, was placed on the

top as a distinct defiance of the family of Strozzi, in the magnificent palace farther down the street, by the Medici, after the battle of Montemurlo. The triumphant Cosimo ultimately vanquished Filippo Strozzi in the prison of the Fortezza, where the brilliant gentleman died mysteriously, as all human obstacles in the path of the ruler had a fashion of doing.

Cosimo I. is one of the most splendid figures in the history of the city. His welcome to the pilgrim of other lands is no less superb than that of Lorenzo the Magnificent. He exerted a powerful influence on the embellishment of the capital, acting on the Italian axiom of the fifteenth century that five qualifications were essential to the founding of colonies and towns,—a healthy air, a soil and climate attractive to influence the settlement of strangers, a strong defensive position, an abundance of the comforts of life, especially water, and vicinity to the sea or a river.

After his reign more than ever the praise of the poet was verified:—

“Of all the fairest cities of the earth,
None is so fair as Florence. ’T is a gem
Of purest ray; and what a light broke forth
When it emerged from darkness! Search within,
Without; all is enchantment. ’T is the past
Contending with the present.”

If Lorenzo the Magnificent was the Carrara marble in humanity, with many blemishes, and even an occasional serious flaw, yet mellow and refined in tone, capable of assuming the form and polish of many subtle phases of beauty, Cosimo was a man of porphyry, a coarser grain of cruelty and brutality in his nature, calculated to turn the edge of all tools of filial love, blunted and repulsed by the cold hardness of a terrible personality.

Cosimo I. was the son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and

Maria Salviati, and was born in 1519. He was the vigorous branch of a vigorous stock. Caterina Sforza, the courageous and impetuous Madonna of Imola, who is the type of the Italian woman of her time, loving passionately, and hating with equal intensity, intrepid, and full of quick-witted resource in moments of danger, widow of two husbands, — Count Girolamo della Rovere and Giacomo Feo, both murdered by her subjects of Forli and Imola, — had married Giovanni de' Medici. The third husband died in a few months. Caterina gave birth to Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the most famous soldier of his time. The latter married Maria Salviati, and Cosimo I. was the child of this union. Giovanni delle Bande Nere, wounded in the war of Lombardy, died on the banks of the Adda.

If Maria Salviati has not been accorded a conspicuous place in history, it was not for lack of maternal ambition or policy. Left a widow, she hastened to Rome with her son, to seek the protection of the Pope Clement VII. Returning to Florence and fearing all enemies, she next withdrew to Venice, where her boy was much caressed by the Doge, the Gondi, Tiepoli, and the Strozzi, then in exile.

The Medici rule had fallen into feeble hands. The first aim of Cosimo and his mother must have been to grasp the power, and restore the ancient vigor of the race, the honor of the shield having been so sadly tarnished by the supremacy of the illegitimate branches. The way was already prepared. From the Magnificent the line of rulers, — Piero, Giuliano, Giovanni, and Lorenzo — culminated in Alessandro, who was assassinated by his cousin, Lorenzino. Duke Alexander, called the Moor from his dark complexion, had even destroyed the Campana, the great bell of Florentine freedom, which weighed twenty-two thousand pounds, and had much silver in the compound.

Cosimo I. was declared his successor, through the influence of Cardinal Cibo; and the choice was confirmed by the Emperor Charles V. He further obtained the victory over the Florentines in the battle of Montemurlo. Emulous of the glory of his ancestors, Cosimo sought to make himself the centre of art as well as power. He asserted his claim to Florence as the son of John of the Black Band. The commonwealth, weakened by war, siege, and famine, and the oppression of Duke Alessandro, opposed slight resistance. Cosimo was eighteen years of age.

Benvenuto Cellini's comment on the accession was eminently characteristic: "When I heard this, I laughed and said: These men of Florence have set a young man on a splendid horse; they have given him spurs, and put a bridle in his hand, and turned him into a beautiful field full of flowers and fruits and many delights, with strict orders not to pass certain bounds. Now, tell me, when he takes a fancy to ride over them, who can restrain him? Who shall give laws to him who can make them?"

Cosimo married Eleanore of Toledo, daughter of Don Pedro, Viceroy of Naples. The fair Eleanore, familiar in the stiff brocade and pearls of Bronzino's portraiture, seems to muse on her own melancholy fate and that of her children. Don Pedro, worthy father-in-law, found sepulchre in one of those tombs above the Cathedral door, possibly weary of the pomps and vanities of the world as embodied in his own sphere. The man of porphyry was a prince, but ever a merchant prince.

He inherited a love of mercantile pursuits, and held commercial relations with England, Spain, Antwerp, and Augsburg. He manifested interest in mining operations. He built the citadel at Siena, the harbor and defences of Porto Ferraio, San Martino in Mugello, fortified cities and coast lines, and opened the free port of Leghorn. He stimulated all labors, — the fabrication of cloth-of-gold,

the Sicilian craft of working in coral at Pisa, and the manufacture of Venetian mirrors and vases, having lured some Murano workmen to Florence. He attempted to equal the perfection of Chinese porcelain, while working in *pietra-dura* was introduced by a young Frenchman from Rome, in 1568. He respected literature and art, honoring the historians, Varchi, Adriani, and the elder Ammirato, as well as Michelangelo, Cellini, Vasari, and Giovanni da Bologna. The porphyry was not Carrara marble. The intuitive artistic taste of Lorenzo the Magnificent, which led to personal criticism in the school of the garden of St. Mark, was lacking in Cosimo, who permitted Baccio Bandinelli to gain his ear, to the exclusion of greater artists. Michelangelo was thwarted by this influence, while Tribolò, who, in the first promise of talent, was to have executed the statues of Heaven and Earth in the Medici Chapel, was allowed to remain on the level of mere stucco ornamentation and arranging state festivals, such as the bridal entry of Eleanore of Toledo into the city, or the baptism of the heir and eldest son, Francesco, in the Baptistry, when the duke and duchess went in procession, and Don Giovanni, the imperial minister, held the infant at the font, in the name of Charles V.

Cosimo founded the Florence academies of painting and of literature. He planted the Botanical Garden, reputed to be the oldest in Europe, in the rear of the monastery of St. Mark, in order to prevent the nuns of the neighboring convent from being disturbed at their prayers by the holiday games of ball. He repaired and completed the Laurentian Library, bought the collection of Cardinal Carpi, had manuscripts rebound, and the works of Tuscan abbeys and convents added. To him are owing the Trinity Bridge, the Villa of Petraja, the Boboli Gardens, much of the Pitti Palace, the Uffizi, and the state apartments of

the Palazzo Vecchio, still known as those of the duchess. He built the Mercato Nuovo, where the bronze boar by Tacca, the pupil of Giovanni da Bologna, still mounts guard over the gushing fountain, and the fish-market, with the Ionic columns and medallions of dolphins.

He made stringent game laws, and had vast parks enclosed for the preservation of deer, goats, stags, hare, quail, pheasant, heathcock, and pigeons, while his miserable subjects looked on at the sport of the nobles clad in graceful costumes of the chase. Beasts of the desert were actually hunted in Tuscan woods, — wolves, bears, and creatures of the cat tribe.

In the Church of St. Hubert, "Serhumido," near the Porta Romana, the stole of the patron of sportsmen was believed to have imparted magical properties to a certain nail on which it hung, and this nail, preserved in a hunting-horn, could prevent hydrophobia or accidents. One is reminded of the blessing of the chase for the French hunters of the Gobelin tapestries.

Cosimo I. was estimated as a robust, haughty, and firm man of few words, endowed with patience, extreme caution, deep dissimulation, sagacity, resolution, and rigor. He died of paralysis at the age of fifty-five years, was laid in state in the grand-ducal robes, and interred in the mausoleum of San Lorenzo.

Historians find no more sombre page in the Medicean annals than that of the strong man with the auburn beard, yet the dissertations may readily become morbid, terrible, and even false.

The dark blemishes on this surface prosperity were the death of his sons and his wife, of fever contracted during the autumn journey along the Maremma, under suspicion of poison, and his failure to defend Piero Carnesecchi, the Florentine gentleman, and adherent of the Medici, from having the cloak of the Inquisition, the *Sambenito*.



painted with flames and devils, thrown over him, by order of the Pope. Even the romances of his life lack the poetical elements of more chivalrous natures, — the attachment to the beautiful Eleanora degli Albizi, or the meeting with Camilla Martelli in crossing the unfinished gallery of the Ponte Vecchio, which resulted in the marriage of the dowerless maiden, by advice of the Pontiff.

The chief interest inspired by Duke Cosimo in the mind of the resident of the Street of the Watermelon is another phase of his character. Did he practise alchemy in the depths of the palace, mysterious rites which should result in the discovery of the philosopher's stone? From the laboratory of a prince the Justice of the Piazza Santa Trinità emanated.

Leaving the spot and seeking the Lung' Arno, we turn to the left, pass the Jeweller's Bridge, gain the arches of the Uffizi, and enter the door.

Ascending the steep flights of steps, the porphyry medallions of Francesco del Tadda are noticeable in the vestibule. At the end of the long corridor is the small cabinet, with the vault supported on columns of *verde-antique* and alabaster. In the centre is placed the table representing the port of Leghorn, with ships afloat on a sea of Persian lapis-lazuli, even to the galleys of the order of Saint Stephen, dragging along Turkish captives. The place is the shrine of the splendor of the Medici. Those vases of Oriental sardonyx, red and flowered Sicilian jasper, carnelian, and amethyst, were made for Lorenzo the Magnificent. That casket of rock-crystal, lined with silver, fashioned by Valerio Vincentino, aided by his daughter, with the tiny scenes of the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, the Flagellation and Passion, set in channelled columns, with the exquisite enamelled cornice, attributed to Cellini, was a wedding gift of Catherine de' Medici.

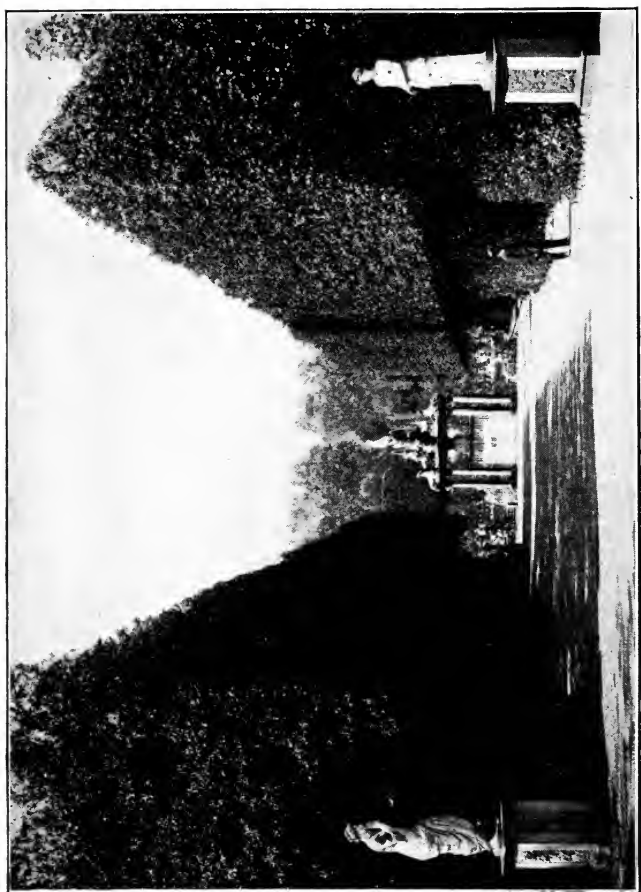
The cases contain articles intended to decorate the altar

of the Medicean mausoleum of San Lorenzo and the reliquary constructed by Michelangelo. The ciborium of Buontalenti is a not less suggestive ruin of columns of Siennese agate, Bohemian *verde*, rock-crystal set with garnets, topaz, turquoise, pearls, rubies, and brilliants, and statuettes of the Apostles, of silver-gilt, alabaster, agate, and chalcedony. Yonder urns and vases were executed by the order of Clement VII. The curious portrait of Cosimo II., with the perspective of a magnificent room, the figure raised, with the head, hands, and legs, as well as the lining and ermine of the mantle of Volterra jasper, the hair of Egyptian flints, the dress of gold, enamel, chalcedony, and red jasper, sprinkled with three hundred diamonds, still surprises by its richness.

Cosimo I. takes precedence here in his own massive personality. The column of crystal commemorates the destruction of the Siennese Republic. The jewelled picture of the Piazza Signoria, in *pietra-dura* and gold, the work of Maestro Giorgio Gaffuri of Milan, with a sky of lapis-lazuli, jasper, and heliotrope for the houses and pavement, arches of the palace of rock-crystal, has the statue of Cosimo in its place (erected after his death), the David, Hercules, and Marzocco of gold.

The exquisite shapes of crystal emanated from the laboratory and studios of a prince. Cups of *aqua-marine*, vases of emerald, masks of turquoise with diamond eyes, beakers with enamelled handles, belong to his reign.

Behind this luxury of beautiful design in fragile form is the still more characteristic phase of hewing and polishing rock masses. The red and gray tints of the granite of obelisks, the golden mellowness of alabaster, the black stone of Greece and Egypt known as *paragone*, the green and yellow serpentine, did not escape the eye of the merchant prince any more than his contemporaries, the Roman pontiffs and the rulers of rival Italian States.



Cosimo I. sought further. He found the fragments of porphyry to make the basin of the fountain of the Boboli Gardens. Porphyry finds a mediæval association in the mind with the flowing waters, artificial grottos, and ilex walks bordered with statues, of stately gardens.

The method of cutting the hard surface had been lost or abandoned as too difficult since the classical age. There was a theory, derived from the Egyptians, that the red stone, mottled with white spots, was more tender at the date of excavation from the quarry, and became hard on exposure to the sun, rain, and ice, as the columns, statues, fountains, and masses of building took form. The temple of Bacchus outside of Rome, the sepulchre of Saint Constanza, daughter of the Emperor Constantine, adorned with groups of children, holding fruit and garlands, tombs, sarcophagi,—did Cosimo I. dream of equalling the excellence of these works? Had the statue in the Farnese Palace at Rome or the wolf of the courtyard aroused his admiration?

That remarkable man, Leo Battista Alberti, accomplished in every branch of science, art, and literature, who designed for his friend, Cosimo Rucellai, the façade of the Church of Santa Maria Novella, the Rucellai Palace in the Via Vigna Nuova, with the opposite *loggia*, as well as the chapel representing the sepulchre at Jerusalem in the Church of San Pancrazio, had been interested, as an architect, to the working afresh of porphyry. To wield a saw of copper without teeth between two workmen with emery powder and water, or to invent a system of wheels for use where the chisel was ineffectual, resulted in a threshold of a doorway, and eighteen antique letters. Alberti abandoned the task.

When Ascanio Colonna gave an antique *tazza* of porphyry to the Pope Julius III., and Michelangelo was requested to mend it, he gave up the work as fruitless.

Not so Duke Cosimo I. In his laboratory of a prince certain herbs were boiled in water, and the steel tempered in the liquid to the requisite durability to cut porphyry. What other distillations may not have taken place in the laboratory of a ruler who has been named a second Tiberius?

And Francesco del Tadda? He is one of the most remote and faint scintillations of the star rays shed abroad on his path by Savonarola. The details of his career are meagre, perhaps inaccurate, and yet they have a flavor of the age. We have ample scope for meditation in his story.

He belonged to the Ferrucci family, of which Francesco da Siena was one member, and Andrea di Piero Ferrucci, architect and sculptor, another. The latter went to Naples in the employ of Don Ferrante, after whose death he returned to Tuscany. He sculptured the Ancona of the high altar in the Cathedral of Fiesole and the half figure of Marsilio Ficino in the Florence Duomo, and began the monument of Antonio Strozzi in Santa Maria Novella, completed by his scholars.

Francesco di Giovanni, called Cecco del Tadda, was taught by Cosimo I. to temper tools with the juice of plants, to cut porphyry, as harder than other substances except gems, — flint, agate, onyx, and jasper. Such is the simple record. The results of his toil were several busts of the Medici, a sarcophagus mounted on a bronze pedestal, and the statue of Justice on the column in the Piazza Santa Trinità.

Cecco del Tadda worked in the Duomo with his brother-in-law. The two sculptors, full of lively intelligence, discussed the topics of their time as they labored, the elder doubtless inspired with disapproval of the rash impulsiveness of youth. In the church where Savonarola had preached they spoke much of the monk of St. Mark.

The brother-in-law was a bitter adversary, while the young Cecco warmly defended the memory of the reformer. It is almost the sole revelation of character we have of him, apart from the admirable industry that shaped the porphyry, — a fervent and possibly illogical advocacy of the dead, on the part of a young workman of another generation. He may have been brought under the influence of Savonarola's followers, — the Piagnoni and the children who carried the Christ Child in the procession of Palm Sunday, — and the more readily resented the scoffing comments of the brother-in-law in the temple where Savonarola's voice had died to silence. The circumstances of this advocacy recurred to the sculptor in after-life, in the fashion of an age largely influenced by dreams, portents, and miracles.

Francesco del Tadda was swept away by the tide that carried so many artists to Rome. He took service under the Pope Clement VII., as a bombardier, and endured the horrors of the siege. He was smitten with the plague, and carried in a cart to a *lazzaretto* near St. John Lateran. On the way two Dominican friars met him. Aroused by their approach, and inspired with a sense of awe, the sick man fell on his knees in the cart. One of the Dominicans took an ointment from his wallet and made the sign of the cross on the forehead of the plague-stricken patient, saying in a clear voice, "This I do, because you have had faith in Fra Girolamo."

The monk vanished; the malady was instantly healed; and the artist always believed that Savonarola had appeared to him in person, for his defence of the reformer's memory in the Florence Duomo in his youth.

The secret of working in porphyry was transmitted to his son, Romulus, and through the latter to his son, Pompeo, who worked in Rome under Paul V. Another

member of the family, Andrea, made some statues in the Boboli Gardens during the reign of Cosimo II.

The secret of cutting porphyry by means of the tools tempered in the laboratory of a prince ranks with the guarding in the family of the Della Robbia enamel, and the glass-making of the Venetian Islands.

Emerging from the Uffizi, the equestrian statue of Cosimo I. confronts us in the Piazza Signoria. He has the aspect of a conqueror, and rides his horse gracefully. When Giovanni da Bologna lowered the scaffolding about the completed work, he was wise enough to conceal himself behind the partition, and listen to the comments of the spectators. A peasant remarked that the forelegs of the horse lacked the callosities on the inner side. Gian da Bologna raised the partition again, and cleverly added the requisite roughnesses in the parts indicated by the rustic critic.

Cosimo I. is seen at his best, seated on his charger in the square. He is the ruler of the city, the collector of statues, books, rock-crystal, and the patron of porphyry-cutting.

Following the Arno bank once more back to the Via Tornabuoni, the clouds have parted, and transient sunshine glows on Justice on her granite column.

The crowd ebbs and flows below; brilliant equipages sweep along in the afternoon drive to the Cascine; the flower-venders are abroad. The latest scion of the race of Strozzi emerges from the gateway of the palace, and possibly there is some descendant of the Medici in the group of young men gathered about the Nobles' Club.

The statue of Justice remains as the work of Francesco del Tadda. Without religious sentiment in composition, and the caprice of a prince in defying a rival in a first erection, the sunshine of the passing years glorifies the memory of the obscure artist. Justice holds no similar written scroll, yet resembles in this respect the statue of

Saint John in the Strasburg Cathedral on which Sabina von Steimbach worked. "The grace of God be with thee, O Sabina, whose hands from this hard stone have fashioned my image!"

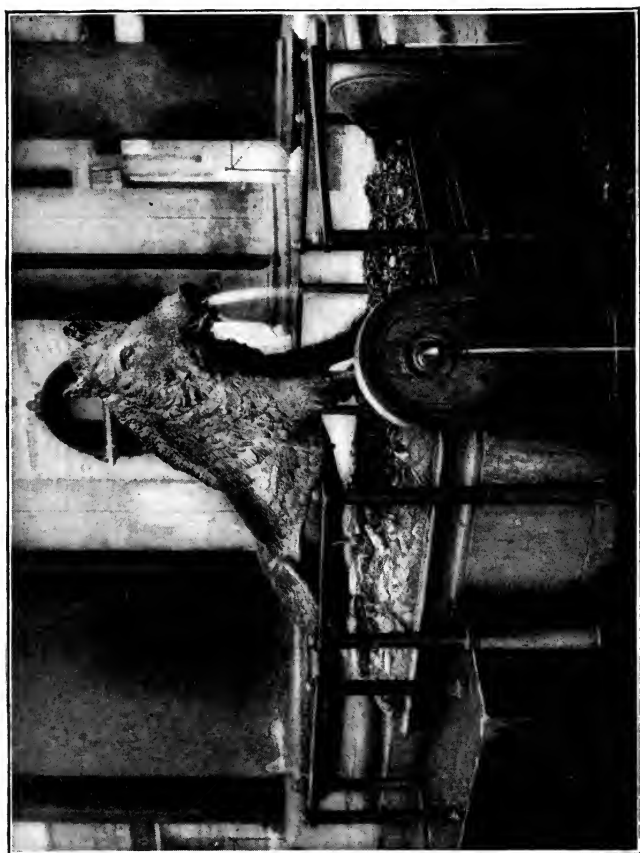
There is another curious association with the statue of Justice in the Piazza Santa Trinità. The story still circulates in the sphere of poor servants of how years ago a valuable ornament of pearls disappeared from a palace of the vicinity, and a valet taxed with the theft was cast into prison, while protesting his innocence. In Florence, as elsewhere, no crime of the king's highway was more severely dealt with than the command: "Thou shalt not steal." The pet magpie of the household, a true *Gazza ladra*, passed unnoticed; and the servant pined in prison until such time as workmen, ascending the column of Justice to make some needful repairs, discovered the stolen jewels hidden at her feet. The bird had seized the glittering bawble, and flown across to the lofty perch to conceal it.

On the right the door of the Viesseux Library is ever open to the student, the politician, the mere loiterer desirous of amusing an idle hour. Of these all may lose themselves in the minds of other men, like Charles Lamb, or enter a youth and emerge a citizen of the world, as Leopardi in boyhood haunted the library of his father in his native town of Recanati.

Night falls as we retrace our steps to the Shrine of the Five Lamps. The sunset has faded, and clouds again obscure the sky. A cold wind sweeps down from Fiesole through the streets of the town.

The black box has been placed on a bracket. We take it down and seek to open it, mindful of the merchant's instructions. In vain! The box presents a smooth surface that baffles every effort. We restore it to the bracket, vexed and mystified. After all, it is better closed.

Perhaps the box is not old, but made by some modern marble-cutter. Perhaps Duke Cosimo I. was not as wicked as his enemies would fain brand him to posterity. The door of the antiquity shop is locked, but surely the master and his cat are chuckling together within.





CHAPTER XV.

THE BRONZE BOAR.

AFTER the living Florence cat, richly furred and purring with drowsy affability in every shop-door, the most genial welcome accorded to the stranger is that of the bronze Boar of the Mercato Nuovo.

Il Porcellino (The Little Pig) is altogether a friendly beast. Generations of children have stood on tiptoe to drink eagerly of the pure stream of water flowing from his dripping jaws. Generations of citizens and country people alike have found in this fountain a familiar and favorite rendezvous of a lifetime; hence, no doubt, the caressing diminutive of the town name, *Il Porcellino*.

The surroundings and associations of the Boar are always picturesque. Approach the spot in the tender twilight, and the crowding roofs, the narrow and irregular streets branching off to the left, and the animal rising on the pedestal as if about to trot away from the place for the night, have the neutral tones and delicate lines of an etching.

Traverse the Via Porta Rossa from the wide thoroughfare, the Via Tornabuoni, in the night, skirting the Loggia of the Mercato Nuovo, and the Boar may be discovered crouching back in the heavy shadows of the arches, his smooth flank glistening in the starlight, when the scene resembles a photograph.

Day glorifies the Boar with a wealth of color, as the tide of varied humanity ebbs and flows about the statue.

Usually a bustling crowd pervades the *loggia* during the hours of noonday. Now the arches are hung with knitted or woven woollen shawls, pale blue, white, vermilion, and striped stockings; and the populace chaffers over prices in the possible purchase of these luxuries. Now the market of straw is held here, — golden bundles cut in lengths, and whole sheaves piled up on all sides, — with the ruddy country folk standing in groups, their cloaks and coats of many seasons faded to yellowish-green and russet tints, and the women and girls plaiting long strips, their fingers moving with the mechanical rapidity of knitting, as they hover about in the crowd. A few loose straws float in the basin of water at the feet of the Boar, and some children launch a fleet of wild poppies as boats, while their seniors discuss the price of grain.

The Flower City of late years, by a happy inspiration, has elected to hold a weekly sale of sweet or rare plants in the *loggia*. Where could a more beautiful setting be found for a flower-show in any capital? Our Boar is embedded in bloom, and the sunshine strikes sparks of lustrous gold from the bronze head and shoulders. His aspect is full of benevolence. If he is kin to the wild boars hunted in the Maremma by king or courtier, his tusks do not savagely wound assailants. The *contadini* may recognize in him a cousin to the lean black pigs, acorn-fed, driven down the Casentino from the Apennines, where the shepherds and the mountaineers make the humble utensils out of pine and beech wood, — the ladles, bowls, broom-handles, pepper-boxes, and sieves that go forth over all Italy, Germany, and the Orient in emulation of the French industry of the Vosges.

In March weather the columns of the *loggia* are heaped with pink hyacinths, daffodils, and carnations, starring silvery-gray tendrils of leaves.

Another morning the branches of white lilies of waxen

perfection of cup and hue, imitated in silver-work on church altars, and carried by Carlo Dolci's angel of the Annunziation in the picture of the Pitti Gallery, load the air with a sickly sweetness of heavy perfume. Again, the anemones, crocus, primrose, and violet hold a luxuriant riot of possession of the historical *loggia*, or the homely lilac makes a bower of soft, snowy bloom.

The loiterers who frequent the Mercato on such occasions, lured hither by the flowers, like the honey-seeking bees and wasps, have a certain interest to the speculative and philosophical mind, if man's noblest study be truly mankind. The crowd meets to greet and gaze at one another. A rubicund old English gentleman chooses a sprig of heliotrope for his button-hole, without deep political significance of appertaining to any league, but to forget his gout in the exquisite fragrance of the blossom. The mature American, with no less doleful reminders of the inexorable summer duty before him of seeking Vichy or Carlsbad, briskly bargains for a bunch of richest clove-scented pinks, and is a boy again in his grandmother's garden while smelling luxuriously the cluster in his hand. He feels himself to be a second Columbus in discovering the identical pink on the Arno bank. The German savant beams on all the world through his gold-rimmed spectacles as he buries his broad countenance in a huge bouquet of rosebuds and camellias. Why does that lady blanch deadly pale, and thrust aside a mass of jonquils, as if the scent stifled her? Ah, the endless chain of memories clinging to fragile flowers! Family emblems, the favorites of those long dead, pleasure in certain distinctive colors, the reminder of some anniversary of rare joy and good-fortune,—all these emotions may be tasted in the flower-market of Florence, sentiments as complicated and mysterious as the diverse characters of the plants, here a leaf bathed in dew, shrinking from rude contact with

currents of air and changes of season, there a jewelled chalice from tropical forests artfully baited to entrap and devour insects.

Here as readily as in other towns the public may be accepted botanically. In the flower-market humanity, vigorous, sound, and wholesome, is discoverable, together with many a prickly cactus-growth,—“the Carlyles of vegetation,”—the odd, capricious orchids, and the cosmopolitan hybrids of gardening civilization, sprays, plumes, myriads of blossoms like butterflies, having a fanciful loveliness, airiness, and originality.

The human nettle abounds. “Though you stroke the nettle ever so kindly, yet will it sting you,” says the proverb. Boileau affirmed that people are born spiteful. Other human flowers have bloomed and faded here in past centuries.

In 1490 the spot was enclosed in a scaffolding, and hung with superb arras by the wise old citizen, Cosimo, to entertain Galeazzo Sforza of Milan, who, at the age of fifteen years, was travelling to neighboring Italian duchies, as the Czarewitch now visits Constantinople and India, or the Prince of Naples the Crimea and St. Petersburg. Wise old Cosimo de’ Medici, a very affable host, Milan being always feared by Florence in all political machinations, allowed his grandson, Lorenzo, to do the honors to the guest in this day-ball, where sixty young Florentines danced a *ballata*, with beautiful girls. Frequent changes of costume occurred among the participants to vary the graceful entertainment.

What a picture the item of history suggests! The elders looked on, — Cosimo, Pater Patriæ, noting the elegance of the young Lorenzo without an intuition, possibly, of the consummate abilities, as yet undeveloped, of the Magnificent of his race. Pope Pius II., also the guest of the Flower City, the pontiff of refined and epicurean tastes,

fond of smiling landscapes, and a daily fare of pheasants, partridges, boar, or succulent *pâtés*, evinced gentle approval of juvenile gayety. The Pope, received with suitable honors, had entered the town, not riding on a mule, but borne in a brocaded litter to his lodging in the convent of Santa Maria Novella by four great lords sojourning in Florence, — Sismondo di Malatesta, Seigneur of Rimini, the rulers of Forli and Faenza, and another. Galeazzo received, as gifts, silver basins engraved with the arms of the Florentine commonwealth, goblets, ewers, and comfit-stands.

Twelve years later Galeazzo again visited Florence, when recently married to Bona of Savoy, on the occasion of those religious pageants in which the Church of Santo Spirito was burned to the foundations. Many other flower shows have been held here in the history of the town, and Time has ruthlessly mown down the blossoms. What are the dancers and the lenient elders now save withered leaves scattered on the wind, the robes of velvet and satin shrunken and limp, the gilded and jewelled crowns tarnished, broken, forgotten?

And our friendly bronze Boar? Pietro Tacca fashioned him presumably from the model of the antique boar in the vestibule of the Uffizi; and in the later days of Medicean glory *Il Porcellino* was placed on his pedestal of fountain and adopted by the city.

Grateful posterity, on whom he conferred so much tranquil enjoyment in this single work, might wish to know more of the sculptor. What manner of man was Pietro Tacca? Details of his career are meagre. Vasari mentions him as Pietro Tacca, of Carrara, fellow-pupil of John of Bologna, with the Flemish Pietro Francavilla, who designed the statues of the Seasons on the Trinità Bridge. Other labors of Pietro Tacca were the monument of Duke Ferdinand de' Medici at Leghorn, and casting the

bronze equestrian statue of the same prince in the Piazza of the Annunziata of Florence.

We have another glimpse of Pietro Tacca, full of pathos, and not devoid of a touch of humor. Cinelli states that when Ravenna gave Dante burial, the Archbishop had a cast made of the poet's head in the sepulchre which subsequently came into the possession of John of Bologna, who bequeathed it to Tacca. The latter showed the treasure to the Duchess Sforza, and the noble dame stole the cast, carrying it off wrapped in a scarf of green cloth. Tacca was much grieved by the loss.

Such are the glimpses of character, good and bad, the odd threads to be disentangled from the silken skein of life in the Flower City, — the great lady unscrupulously laying hands on a coveted new toy, and the poor artist left aghast and bereft of his inherited relic.

On the 20th of November, a ray of sunshine penetrates the Street of the Watermelon, and slanting through the window, rests on the Boar in bronze placed on a little carved bracket.

The antiquarian of the shop yonder is the magician who holds the neighborhood in the meshes of his web. Only the other day the Boar, purporting to be an antique bronze, three inches in length, sat among the festoons of lace, the ivory carvings, and enamels of his casement.

Now the animal beholds himself reflected in a mirror on all sides, as it were. He is down on the writing-desk, chipped out of green Prato marble, in guise of paper-weight, and he is carved in Volterra alabaster on the lid of a casket in the corner.

The ray of brilliant autumn sunshine floating in the barred casement is a reminder that it is the birthday of the Queen Margherita. To ramble abroad is to find banners fluttering in the cool breeze, a hint of frosty crispness in the morning air, and all the fountains of the city

spouting in silvery sprays, glittering shafts, and revolving fans and wheels, sprinkling the green sward of parks and terraces. A fountain playing in the sunshine reminds one of the Queen of Italy.

If we leave the Street of the Watermelon, pass the Cathedral, walk along the Via Calzajuoli to the Via Porta Rossa, at the angle of the Piazza Signoria, and by this narrow way gain the Mercato Nuovo, we find the bronze Boar enthroned among the flowers.

The *loggia* is filled with chrysanthemums. The central space is a true Temple of the Sun, in amber hues, lovely Japanese blooms, downy saffron, and anemone, of perfect form, straw tints, mandarin and nankeen yellows, lemon, pale gold, varying from tiny buttons to great balls. Lustrous brown crowns, pyramids of copper-color with broad petals, orange-tipped, and wreaths of dark crimson flowers frame the Boar with a marvellous richness of effect on the November day.

The white marguerite amid fine green leaves flanks the enclosure, lending a significance to the occasion. Every customer of the market carries or should sport a small bouquet of daisies on the 20th of November. The sympathetic little flower may always be accepted as the astrologer of lovers, or be accorded wholly to royalty by the sojourner in the land, the petals plucked off in meditation as swift as the passage of a sunbeam athwart the *loggia*, filled with the blended tones of the chrysanthemums, weaving a fabric even more gorgeous — work of the autumn day — than the costumes of the dancers of past years, recalling, as the shredded blossoms flutter to the ground, that the House of Savoy has boasted of nineteen Margarets in long and glorious annals.

Whiter than snow, the first petal represents the austere sister of Umberto III., and daughter of Amadeus, who died on the Island of Cyprus in 1148, during the Crusades.

She became a Cistercian nun in 1150. The second is veined with the pink of warm youth, as one of the most beautiful women of her epoch, the celebrated Marguerite of Geneva, reputed to have allowed Thomas of Savoy to abduct her instead of leaving her to espouse the King of France. Landgravine of Alsace, mother of the unfortunate Beatrice, second wife of King Manfred; Marchesa of Monferrato, smitten by the terrible plague described by Boccaccio, and many others to the last silvery petal, the star of Italy, the single chrysanthemum, preserves its purity still.

The bronze Boar does not wear a chaplet of daisies about his neck, but several flowers float in the brimming basin of the old fountain of the market-place.

CHAPTER XVI.

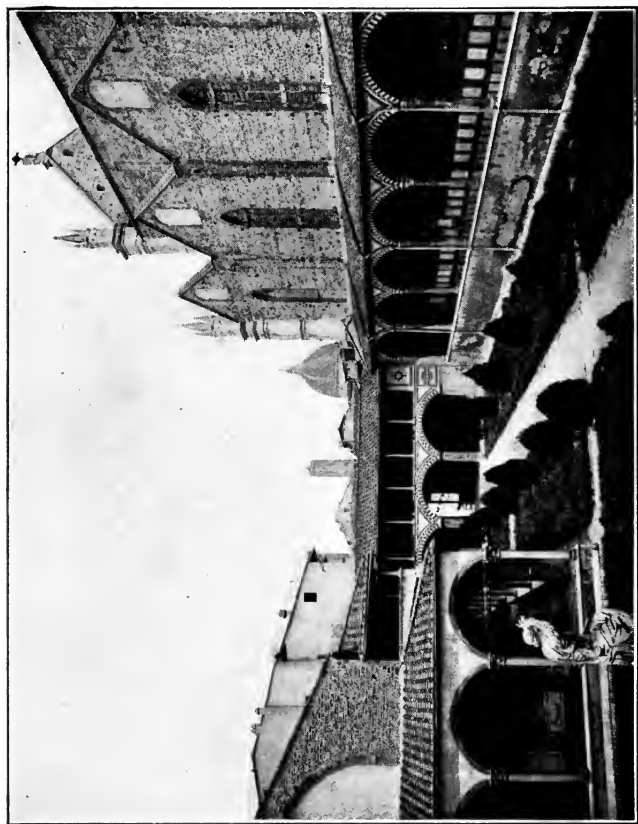
A SILVER LAMP.

FLORENCE wears her most stately aspect as a funeral city. Through all the lapse of centuries her citizens have revelled in funeral pomp, dignified and sedate in detail, without the garish display of more southern provinces, and devoid of the ghastly aspect of the ghostly barges gliding over the lagoons to the Cemetery Island at Venice.

On a March evening when the lamps of the Shrine have been lighted, a *cortège* passes the window. The great banner of the Misericordia, glittering with metallic embroideries and fringes, is borne aloft above the black-robed brothers, with a bier covered with a rich pall and crowned with funeral wreaths in their midst, priests in white vestments, and penitents carrying torches. The event is sufficiently commonplace. A Florentine noble has died, and the confraternity of the Misericordia is transporting his mortal remains to its chapel for the night, on the Piazza of the Duomo, whence he will be taken for interment to a villa in the Casentino. The black banner and the moving crowd obscure the twinkling stars of the Tabernacle for a moment, and then pass on, with candles and torches flaring, and the rising and falling intonation of chanting voices becoming fainter in the distance. A wandering ray from the Shrine once more falls across the barred casement.

The inmate of the chamber obeys a whim, and lights the dark interior. From the central arch of the ceiling swings the silver lamp on wrought chains. A Mahometan lamp that once might have been one of the eight hundred pendent amid the columns of the mosque of Cordova soon burns in a distant corner, with the Buddhist lamp of a Japanese house opposite, flanked by a battered copper cup resembling an inverted Byzantine cupola from a Samoyed tent, and which contains a thick wax taper. Several ancient Egyptian lamps in the form of enamelled tulips and lilies gleam on brackets. Wicks are dipped in the shallow receptacles of the curious filagree frame of beaten brass, in the semblance of the seven-branched candlestick of the Morocco Jews, held by a massive hand, and attached to the wall, over a fragment of faded brocade. The silver lamp, fed with perfumed oils, sheds abroad a mild radiance that gradually dominates all feeble or erratic illumination in the more remote angles of the apartment. If many creeds and peoples are represented by the different lights, the ray of Christianity is the most penetrating and enduring.

The antiquarian brought the relic here, and suspended it by the chains, his manner betraying unusual animation. He affirmed that it is an ecclesiastical lamp of great age and much value of historical interest. It belonged to the ancient Church of San Andrea in the Old Market, demolished to form the new *piazza* for the equestrian statue of Victor Emanuel. The archæologist, in the vein of modern grumblers, as well as earlier writers, censuring all ruthless destruction of old buildings and shrines, may well lament the disappearance of the little church mentioned as standing in the eighth century, and having attached a small convent of nuns, the first established within the city walls. A curious custom is reputed to have been practised in this sanctuary even during the past century.



On the Festa of San Andrea a lamp had a vase of glass attached containing fish, thus indicating that the Apostle was a fisherman. These fish appertained to the first person who entered the church, and as this one was invariably the prior, who opened the door from within, he enjoyed a good *frittura*.

Has the antiquarian spoken the truth in stating that the silver lamp came from the Mercato Vecchio? Did the first Abbess Radburga, sister of the Bishop Rodingo, who died in 852, ever gaze on the pure flame pulsing up from the metal cup? Did the chains sway from a sunken arch of a lower chapel, at an earlier date, or belong to the latest period of Barocco restoration? Did the subdued radiance glow on the campanile, the little square tower of stone, with three tiers of windows, adorned with columns? Was it quenched in the destructive fire that ravaged a large portion of the town in 1304?

“Entretenez une lampe dans le sanctuaire. La lampe est le symbole de la religion du cœur, qui vit toujours,” writes Ernest Renan.

The spiritualized faculties easily acquire complete ascendancy at such an hour. Journeys around the quiet chamber afford ample scope for revery without departing from the Street of the Watermelon. If the use of the fire of the altar as the symbol of Deity marked the advance of the races from Persia along the shores of the Mediterranean, the flicker of the catacomb lamp on the shelf yonder, of greenish metal with classical shape of handle and apertures for flame, suggests the vital spark of a buried yet unquenchable creed, and the adjacent Hebrew beaked copper lamp no less vividly recalls the excommunication of Spinoza from the religious body in which he had been reared. The central flame of the silver lamp represents the ever-burning luminary of the Romish faith.

Gradually the beautiful and graceful emblem absorbs

entire attention of contemplation, and by a swift transition you are in the Church of Santa Croce on a March day, listening to a requiem celebrated for the recently deceased Florentine citizen, the Marchese Gino Capponi.

On the mind of a stranger, just arrived in the Flower City, the scene was one to make an indelible impression.

In the centre of the Pantheon of Florence rose a sumptuous catafalque, with gigantic candles burning at the four corners, and guarded by the house-servants of the dead nobleman clad in liveries of vivid scarlet. These lackeys afforded the sole spot of color in the temple. The vast assemblage formed a sea of blackness in the chill, colorless sanctuary, and the parchment sheets with a deep mourning margin, distributed by an usher at the entrance, rustled and fluttered in the fingers of the guests like dead leaves. On the left the flagree iron gates of a large chapel revealed rank above rank of veiled ladies, enveloped in *crêpe* draperies. The main altar, decked with sable adornments, concealed and muffled, as it were, the blended voices of the singers in the choir-stalls of the rear. The atmosphere, redolent of incense and hot wax, was cold yet stifling, as if such life as remained in the silent audience and drooping mourners were undergoing some subtle process of being extinguished beneath a lugubrious funeral pall.

The object of these honors was worthy of all possible respect and esteem. Nay, more, he was a type of his day, possessing rare interest even to the stranger from across the sea.

The Marchese Gino Capponi was a patriot in the best sense of the term, a man of letters, a liberal friend and patron of arts and science, a religious soul in the faith of his fathers, and a thoughtful observer of his time, who beheld Europe old and decrepit in contrast with those two young giants, Russia and America. He was a de-

scendant of the Capponi family, noted in the records of the city in 1250 as included in the corporation of the Guilds, and having their houses in the Fondacci of Santo Spirito beside the Vettori. First noted on the side of the people in 1343, there was a Gino Capponi, who was the friend and partisan of Rinaldo degli Albizzi against the Medici. His son, Neri, took part with great valor in the wars against the Visconti and the Sforza. The son of Neri was the famous Piero, who destroyed the treaty before the eyes of the French king, Charles VIII., and threatened to ring the bells of Florence with unusual vehemence. Girolamo, brother of Piero, founded the line whence descended the object of public homage in Santa Croce of our day. The Capponi were *gonfaloniere* of the Republic, and acquired riches in banking and mercantile pursuits. They had a house of business at Lyons, and in other towns of France. In 1596, a Capponi was appointed superintendent of the mint of the Duke of Bavaria. An old man, the dead for whom the catafalque had been raised in the aisle of Santa Croce, and blind for many years, dwelling in the spacious, charming palace of the Via San Sebastiano, with the frescos bright upon the walls of valiant Piero Capponi destroying the treaty, and of Ferruccio at Volterra, with the sunny gardens where the birds sing blithely. The last words of the deceased nobleman might be inscribed on the walls of Santa Croce in characters of gold for all succeeding generations to heed: "Perhaps had I not been stricken with blindness I should be more discontented with myself for all I should have accomplished, while as it is, the little that I have achieved saves me from remorse."

He was born in 1793, the same year that Joachim Rossini, Giovanni Mastai, and Pius IX., saw the light. His parents were the Marquis Pier Roberto, a man of melancholy temperament, formal manners, scrupulous in all

observances of religion, and having in his heart no other emotions than loyalty to God, the family, and his prince, the Grand-duke of Tuscany, and Maddalena Frescobaldi, energetic in will and action, loving and hating with equal passion. The great lady seems to have belonged to the Florentine type of history, a gallery of portraits worthy of study. These were no pale and pure poetical ideals of femininity, but full of the color and life of their race and time, — Dame Acciajuoli defending her home from French soldiers, the mother of Cosimo I. prudently watching over the tender years of the son of Giovanni delle Bande Neri, or the wife of Filippo Strozzi striving to finesse on his behalf with her own powerful family, the Medici.

The French Revolution had followed its course, and the General Bonaparte rose. Tuscany was occupied in 1799 by French troops. The Grand-duke, Pietro Leopoldo, who was allied with Austria and Spain, fled. The Marchese Pier Roberto Capponi displayed his devotion by following his prince into exile. The wife evinced the courage of the Florentine lady by remaining in Florence to confront the foe. The Palazzo Capponi was occupied by French officers and soldiers of whose sojourn the regrettable record remains that they beat the cook, abused the servants, broke the furniture, ordered and failed to pay.

In the year 1800 the family sought Vienna, and the battle of Marengo took place. In manhood Gino Capponi beheld the last act of the great drama in the *fête* at the Tuileries, when he conversed with Napoleon. He made long journeys to Sicily and England, where he gave that respectful study to the British government, even to the election hustings, which was so characteristic of the Italian of the period. His friendships with Lord Minto, Lord Lansdowne, Earl Russel, the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Morgan endured for life. Ugo Foscolo was then a picturesque figure of the exile. He travelled in Holland and

Germany. At Brussels he made the acquaintance of the French painter, David, who had been banished from his own country as a regicide. He visited Waterloo. He sought memories of Pope Adrian at Utrecht, assured that a Flemish pontiff must have proved ridiculous to the mocking Romans, after the luxurious and elegant Leo X. More interesting was the sojourn of the Florentine in Rome in the early portion of the century, when Châteaubriand was the French minister, and always associated with St. John Lateran; the excursions on the desolate Campagna, the meditations on the Via Appia and the Ponte Nomentano, the lingering to witness a rich sunset at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, the intimacy with Lamar-tine, as secretary of Legation, and Gortschakoff, — all these matters may be read in the writings of the blind patriot.

Returned to his proper sphere in the Flower City, he was elected to the Accademia della Crusca, and helped to found the *Antologia*. Giusti died in the palace on the Via San Sebastiano, and his works were collected with religious care. Pietro Colletta, returned from Moravia, was given a villa on the Bologna road wherein to write his history of Naples, and illustrious men were to be met there, — Forti, Leopardi, Giordani, and Frullani. That vigorous personality, King Victor Emanuel, invariably paid a visit to Gino Capponi, when he arrived in Florence.

The parchment of the funeral ode rustled, and the Mass went on. Did all that vast throng ponder on the earthly career of the dead? Gradually they faded to shadows in turn, and you beheld more clearly their surroundings. The great Church of Santa Croce rose to its full proportions, and dwarfed, overpowered, the human element gathered within its walls.

During that glorious period, after the death of Frederick II., when the commonwealth decided to build a Bargello,

span the river with a bridge of Santa Trinità, and strike the first gold florin, it was projected to erect, in majestic form, a church for the Frate Minori. Arnolfo di Cambio, who saw in a vision the towers, walls, and dome of the fair city, must have beheld as well the severe line of these arches, the immense height of the roof, the beauty of the apsis and adjacent chapels, the great round window of colored glass above the entrance, designed by Ghiberti. The mighty architect, divining completion in his own thought, surely grasped the aim of two naves in the shape of a Latin cross, the principal nave cut in three by seven arches, the octagonal pilasters, the semicircle of chapels, containing precious frescos, and the choir behind the main altar, enriched by the ancient family of the Alberti, with the inlaid wood-work in foliage and figures wrought by Manno Mannucci, called Manno de' Cori.

The Franciscans were held in veneration by the Republic, and many benefits bestowed on the order. They were intrusted with the administration of the Hospital of the Misericordia, at San Casciano, and the monastery of Monticelli. In addition, they kept in a closed chamber the custody of the urn used in the election of magistrates. A Franciscan divided with a Dominican the honors of being present at the renewal of the magistrates, and ascended the Ringhiera. Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, preferred to be received as a guest of the convent, in 1342, to lodging in the Palazzo Vecchio or the Bargello.

A hush of profound stillness, succeeded by the clang of a bell, and the black banner of the Misericordia began to part the ripples of crowd to circulate around the catafalque. The dramatic effect was startling yet impressive.

Echo awakened in those subterranean chapels which form a second church beneath the stupendous edifice. Here noble families found sepulchre, and various com-

panies established different religious orders to issue forth at Christmas and Easter with donations for the poor, to succor the sick, to celebrate Mass, with the aid of a monk of Santa Croce, in the Chapel of the Bargello, and with the sanction of the Grand-duke Ferdinand I., at least to visit the most secret dungeons, and often to obtain the release of the prisoners.

Where are they now, — Company of San Francesco del Martello, established by devout men, such as the gardener who worked in the Frate's garden in 1332, Company of the Lauds, Company of Gesu, of Sant' Eligio degli Orefici, of the Casa del Loreto? The chapels are deserted; dust and ashes remain of the banners, standards, and arms.

Thought escaped from the gloom by the lateral nave on the right into the beautiful cloister where the sunshine played over the grass, and the sculptured marble of tomb and column. Lo! the sound of the bell startled the ear even here, and across the portal of the council-chamber of the Tribunal of the Inquisition from 1254 to 1782 rested a dark shadow. Pain, terror, and despair must have passed along this corridor, the judged and to be condemned of centuries. O Lord, how long? The cry was addressed to these stones, more pitiful than the heart of man, in this temple, completed after the return from exile of worthy Michele di Lando in 1383, by a communal provision, as a mirror of civilization and the greatness of country for all time.

To the imperishable honor of the Grand-duke Leopold I. the Inquisition was abolished, and the instruments of torture destroyed in sight of the rejoicing citizens.

Sunshine and shadow play through the arches of the cloister. Laughter and jest as readily succeed sombre thoughts and dark deeds. Thus the memory of the Barbary ape belonging to a merry-hearted painter, Rosso del Rosso, who dwelt in a house of the Corso dei Tintori, in

1500, will recur to the memory, haunted by rack and chain. The painter's window overlooked an inner cloister connected with the infirmary of the convent and the *foresteria*, together with the garden, which boasted of a *pergola* covered with fine grapes, pride of the monks. The ape stole the fruit. The gardener complained, but the depredations continued, until the offender was brought to trial before the Tribunal of the Eight of the *Balia*, who gravely condemned the miscreant to wear such a weight and chain on his leg as should prevent his climbing. Full of malice and diabolical intelligence, the ape contrived to gain the roof of the gardener's cell, and with his irons tear up the tiles, dancing about in ungovernable rage, so that the rain came in on the poor friar. The sleepy garden nook, the monks placidly enjoying their ripening grapes, the roguish painter peeping down on their cloistered paradise, and the sly Barbary ape scaling the wall to occasion a hubbub of indignant protest in the community, — all these elements belong to the memories of dark and austere Santa Croce, as flowers spring from ruined masonry.

In the church the sad, weary requiem continued to breathe forth sobbing lamentation, deep-toned invocation, softened cadences of consolation. A pure tenor note seemed the soul of Cherubini, beaten down by failure and discouragement, and finally soaring in triumph of recognition to the vault of this very temple. The statues of the tombs had a mute aspect of watching, without sharing, the ceremony of the day. Galileo, knowing all things, now had gone forth to eternal contemplation of the heavens. Dante and Michelangelo were shrouded in their own memories. In modest nooks the Abbé Lanzi might still meditate on the Etruscan language, Leopoldo Nobili interrogate Nature, like Galileo, Volta, and Franklin, Giovanni Lami, the encyclopedist, muse on Latin verse, or Count

Vittorio Fossombrone, who held the destinies of Tuscany by draining the Val-di-Chiana, study still the Pontine marshes and the Roman Campagna, while the haughty poet, Alfieri, who created the tragic theatre in Italy, bore the impress of life.

Was the funeral service solely for the person honored, the Marchese Gino Capponi? Other and similar pageants seemed to rise through the pavement, and contest the rights of modern times.

In 1371, Messer Niccolò di Jacopo Alberti, cavalier, who had been made a *gonfaloniere* in 1363, and was esteemed the richest Florentine citizen of his time, died, and was buried in Santa Croce. He was brought to the sanctuary "with much wax and people," on a bed of red stuff, with gold draperies and embroideries. Eight horses accompanied the bier, — one carrying the arms of the populace, as the deceased was a cavalier of the people; another those of the Guelph faction, of which party he was a captain; two were covered with the armorial insignia of his race; yet another with a banner; still another with a helmet, sword, and spurs of gold. These steeds were led by grooms in rich attire, with mantles lined with rare furs. The corpse was deposited in the church, and a sermon preached, the relatives and household being dressed in red, and many families in black. The early historian dwells with especial complacency on the number of torches burned on this august occasion; seventy-two surrounded the bier, and the great arch, as well as the entire church, was similarly illuminated. Three thousand florins were expended, and five hundred persons wept around the bed. The fortune of the knight amounted to three hundred and forty thousand florins, despite his humility, benevolence to the poor, liberality to friends, and loyalty to public interests, which won the love of all.

The death of Messer Francesco Rinuccini, in the month

of August, 1381, was equally memorable of the funeral city. He was interred with great honors. Fifty wax torches accompanied him to Santa Croce, two horses carrying standards, a third the helmet, sword, and spurs of gold, a fourth covered with scarlet trappings. The grooms wore costly mantles bordered with fur. All of the monks of the community came from the altar, bearing torches, and escorted the *cortége* to the Rinuccini Chapel of the sacristy, where eight servants attired in red velvet held draperies of cloth-of-gold over the bier on which reposed the cavalier. He was mourned by all as a gentleman possessing every virtue. His fortune amounted to one hundred and eighty thousand florins.

The silver lamp burns dim in the silent chamber. The hour is late.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STRANGER COLONY.

AN Italian gentleman of a southern province affirms that Florence is a vast hotel where the German, the Russian, the Anglo-Saxon, and even natives from other portions of the country are to be met with, but the true Florentine very rarely.

I. GALILEO'S DISCIPLE.

"Come up to the old Star Tower this evening, and look at the comet," said the Astronomer, pausing in the Street of the Watermelon.

"There is a new comet, then?" queried the inmate of the Florence Window in response. "What portents of good or of dire misfortune does an enlightened world forecast from the augury, — Behring's Straits Fishery problems; fresh complications of possession of Western Africa; renewed friction between France and Germany; the Porte and the Shah of Persia in trouble?"

The Astronomer smiled.

"The Traveller is compiling a volume on comets, in popular scientific form. Ask him to-night."

"Promise to read us your completed poem of Galileo, then."

"My 'Galileo' will *never* be perfected!"

"Patience!"

The Astronomer went his way.

In the cold winter twilight the Tower of Galileo was visible on the crest of the hill. The uniform gray tones of walls, tower, and parapet, crowned by the weather-cock of an earlier hour, which blend so harmoniously with surrounding slopes of olives, had acquired a vivid blackness of outline, sharp and distinct, as seen with the clear horizon beyond, where the crimson fires of sunset had faded to an evening sky of greenish-beryl tints peculiar to the pure atmosphere of Tuscany and Umbria.

The Astronomer lifted his gaze from the city outspread at his feet to the Star Tower on the height, inspired by a sentiment of contentment. All his life he seemed to have been toiling upward to gain such a goal.

He was a tall and slender man of forty-five years of age, with aquiline features, blue eyes of an abstracted expression, and that contour of pointed chin reputed to betoken obstinacy of character. The only son of an American home, the collegian had turned from society to science, imbued with the curiosity of an amateur rather than inspired with serious purpose in research. If astronomy, of all sciences, fills the mind of man with general ideas of a nature the most foreign to daily and prosaic experience, this spoiled son of fortune would scarcely have sought the firmament in weariness of this globe, as an atom whirling through illimitable space among countless other atoms, without the awakening of fervent, youthful hero-worship. His hero was Galileo Galilei. He had read every available work concerning the great man, from the most erudite German researches into the Vatican archives to the most modest form of English tract issued by religious societies. He had suffered all phases of anxiety and weakness in imagination, before the Roman Curia, with the zeal of warm partisanship. He had rejoiced in the ultimate fruits of a triumphant wisdom. Then he had escaped from the petty thralldom of maternal worldly ambition to visit the

places associated with Galileo, following in the footsteps of the philosopher with reverence and enthusiasm.

This later disciple had watched in reverie the movements of Maestro Possenti's famous lamp, suspended from the arch of the Pisa Cathedral, while clouds of incense rose from the silver censers of the altar, and the chanting voices of the choristers filled nave and aisle, albeit it was not for him to determine the isochronism of the vibration of the pendulum by means of testing the throbbing of his own pulse at the moment. He had lingered in silent Padua, and climbed the church towers of Venice in company with the shadowy host of long dead, venerable senators, eager to employ the new telescope of Galileo, spying at the ships on the sea, before the inventor thought of turning the glass in the direction of the starry heavens. Florence and blooming Tuscany had lured him, in turn, from freedom of thought in the Venetian States to sustain the rage and jealousy of the ancient order of Aristotelian philosophy, stirred to the most stagnant depths by bold innovation of experiment. He also journeyed to Rome in a litter, thence returning to the Arno bank by way of Siena, henceforth a prisoner of the Inquisition.

Inspired with profound interest, the modern Astronomer knelt in the little Church of San Giorgio because Galileo was there permitted to receive the sacrament at Easter. Fain would he have trained the vineyards around the villa at Arcetri! Visiting the Torre del Gallo, as a tourist, he had resolved, like the Englishman who once went to Bruges for a week's sojourn, and remained twenty years: "I will dwell here."

He climbed the road, slowly and with marked deliberation, from the Roman Gate, the length of the Poggio Imperiale to the villa of the Grand-duchess Eleanora, and thence along the crest of hill through the suburb of Arcetri to the entrance of the old tower.

The quick Italian eye, whether of priest in wide black hat, groups of soldiers lounging in front of the cavalry barracks, or peasant trudging homeward, defined him as "one of those who go about contemplating the world."

A careworn little dog, with a grizzled muzzle, and an expression of anxiety as of taking care of a mediæval stronghold, wagged a stump of a tail in greeting. The old custodian, type of an age "frosty yet kindly," brought his keys to deposit with the tenant, in order that the latter might visit the tower, at pleasure, during the night. The English child smiled a welcome from a narrow casement above, his fair hair shining like an aureole in contrast with the rough, time-worn masonry.

The Astronomer entered a door at an angle of the court. His abode consisted of a suite of spacious chambers hung with heavy stuffs and tapestries, the tiles and cement of the floors concealed by rich Persian rugs, and wood fires in terra-cotta stoves tempering the severity of winter cold.

The tenant pushed aside the curtains of one door after another to traverse the rooms, where, in the shadowy obscurity of the hour, the light of candles fell here on a standard of armor beautifully wrought of steel, or inlaid with gold and silver, and there sparkled on the richly blended colors of a majolica plaque, and the polished surface of some piece of *cinque-cento* wood-carving. He gained a small chamber at the extremity of the suite which he had chosen for his especial sanctum.

The walls were hung, and the embrasures draped, with blue damask, and silk shot with varied threads, woven at Lucca, and folds of the black velvet of Naples, — fabrics such as Galileo added to the wedding dowry of his sisters in his youth. The inlaid table of the alcove held volumes of the master, bound in white vellum, and with the Florentine Lily designed in gilt on the cover. Conspicu-

ous in the collection were the "Messenger of the Stars," and the "Dialoghe delle Nuove Science." On the window was suspended a thermometer, with a bulb of quaint design, that Galileo might have fashioned. The only sound audible was the slow and monotonous ticking of a very ancient clock in the corner, whose swaying pendulum might have been first set in motion by Galileo. A small loadstone was placed on a bracket. The sole picture of this interior was a Saint Francis, by Cigoli, selected not as much for the excellence of the work as because the painter proved himself a warm friend of Galileo. From the centre of the vaulted ceiling hung a bronze lamp which resembled in form that of the Duomo at Pisa. Above the door an illuminated scroll of parchment repeated, in golden characters, the famous, if doubtful in authenticity, *E pur si muove*.

Fortunate is the man with a hobby! Better still with Euripides:—

"Happy the man whose lot it is to know
The secrets of the earth. He hastens not
To work his fellows hurt by unjust deeds,
But with rapt admiration contemplates
Immortal Nature's ageless harmony,
And how and when her order came to be;
Such spirits have no place for thoughts of shame."

Soon a party of friends arrived to dine, as was their occasional habit, — the English Painter from the apartment above stairs, the Sculptor, calm and reticent in manner, the Churchman, dry and ascetic, the Poet, agitated and self-conscious, the Musician, full of vivacity and movement, and the Traveller, bronzed, wrinkled, with a silvery beard and piercing black eyes shaded by heavy brows, a modern Marco Polo, whose bravery and energy had led him as far as the Arctic Circle and the Desert.

The Astronomer received these guests at the entrance

door, and conducted them to table. A delicate though substantial meal was discussed with deliberation, after which the Poet was urged to read his latest verses, the host having firmly declined to reveal any of his own lucubrations on Galileo.

The Poet produced a roll of manuscript, and modestly requested a critical judgment of a Tuscan idyl which did not lack a certain felicity of expression, although it might be devoid of the grace of a Lorenzo de' Medici or a Politian, in similar vein. The author speedily found himself in the position of Tasso in submitting the "Jerusalem Delivered" to a council of friends, when Sperone Speroni declared the unity of action altogether defective, Scipio Gonzaga pronounced the episode of Erminia as too improbable, while Armida and her enchanted garden were too glowing, and Silvio Antoniano wished all love scenes ruthlessly cut out. Thus the Traveller detected an incorrect version of an Oriental fable, the Churchman disapproved of a palpably heterodox sentiment, and the Musician was fastidious as to the rhythmical flow of the measure adopted.

The host arose and proposed a visit to the tower to admire the comet. The little English child, pet of the table at dessert, slipped after the others, wondering and wakeful, eager to see all.

Oh, the splendor of the winter night on Galileo's Tower! The dome of heaven in the clear Tuscan atmosphere sparkled with a dazzling multitude of stars. On the horizon the comet was visible, growing from a slender golden arrow to a fiery orb with long filaments of light streaming in the rear, as the surrounding darkness deepened. Galaxies of brilliant constellations paved a pathway for this mysterious stranger, as it were; and planets glowed and waned with pale emerald and ruby fires before the awe-inspiring messenger of distant spheres. The Traveller leaned on

the parapet, and soliloquized on these harbingers of woe that inspired terror in superstitious minds for so many ages. He counted on his fingers the notable occasions in her history of war, famine, and flood, when the Flower City had trembled at the advent of one of these golden arrows above her range of surrounding hills. He mused on the dread of Charles V. that his own speedy death was majestically announced by the dawning of a comet.

"What is the ideal of the beautiful?" queried the Astronomer. "Star worlds?"

"No; a stainless soul," protested the Churchman.

"Sound," suggested the Musician.

"Color," asserted the Painter.

"Form," said the Sculptor.

"Verse, of imperishable eloquence," added the Poet.

The Traveller shook his head, and was silent.

The child nibbled a chocolate bonbon, and the keen wind blew back his golden hair like the comet's scintillating train. He did not know what his elders were talking about, and it sounded to him like rubbish, yet he must listen, even if he propped his sleepy eyelids open with his fingers. Later the host found the truant curled up behind a window-curtain, and bore him away to bed in his arms.

The Traveller departed, enveloped in a loose caftan lined with fur, faithful companion of many a long journey on sledges over snowy Norwegian and Swedish wastes. He paused a moment to contemplate the sky.

"Yes, Galileo's star worlds," he meditated. "Who knows how many travellers are climbing mountains, fathoming glaciers, and tracing rivers to their source on yonder planets at this moment? Nay, they may be writing about comets, as well."

A great door opened on the dark Via dei Bardi, and he disappeared.

"The ideal of the beautiful," thought the Poet, pausing in the arches of the Ponte Vecchio, and gazing down into the river, where the reflection of a star trembled in liquid depths. He took the roll of manuscript from his breast, tore the sheets, and tossed the fragments to the stream, repeating slowly:—

"He who descends unhonor'd to the grave,
Leaves of himself on earth such vestige slight
As smoke in air, or foam upon the wave."

The old bridge wrapped in shadows and deserted of all traffic at this hour, and the river flowing beneath, made no response to human longing in the breast of the Poet.

"What is the ideal of the beautiful?" thought the Musician, humming a strain of his last popular waltz, as he paused at the city gate to light a cigarette. A street lamp cast a wavering ray on a palace built of huge blocks of rough stone, like a fortress, whence issued the gay and chirping notes of a mandolin, emanating from the porter's den.

The Musician rapped on the grated casement with his cane.

"I have need of thee, Beppo," he called.

The tinkling of the mandolin ceased; and a youth of the true Florentine type emerged, small, wiry, pale, his curly hair blown about by the wind, and alike indifferent to sleep or cold.

Together master and pupil sought a church of the vicinity, and unlocked a narrow door at an angle of the cloister. The Musician drew a coil of wax taper from his pocket, kindled the wick, and led the way to the organ-loft. Beppo, alert and cheerful, lighted the clusters of candles in the brackets, and vanished to fill the instrument with the requisite volume of air.

The Musician seated himself at the organ in the dark

and silent church, where the saints of the pictures, the angels of the frescos, and the Florentine citizens in their tombs were his audience at this hour. A gigantic Christ, austere of mien, with a golden vault of mosaic for background, seemed to gaze down sternly from the tribune on puny mortal effort. Did the organist feel some subtle influence of these surroundings, as his fingers wandered over the keys? From fragmentary notes, verging on dissonance, to a gradually blended cadence of subdued harmonies, he sought, groped feverishly and fitfully, until he found the clew to his thoughts, the solution of his soul's torment, in the swell of most divine utterances. The stars, set high in the firmament, with the plume of comet sweeping across the zenith, signified to his senses sound, in which the order of tones from one C to the next above became audible without break or interruption. The longing for something better than the present, mingled with the innate, primitive fear of something worse, pierced by the sweetness of sympathy and consolation, filled the church as with the rush of mighty wings.

The Musician quitted the place abruptly, and climbed to a high chamber opening on a *loggia* of the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, where he wrote a fresh composition. Purged of the dross of the theatre by the evening hour in the old Star Tower, baptized by the kindling inspirations of the dark church, did his ear, spiritualized in all power of perception, actually hear the harmony of the spheres?

"What is the ideal of the beautiful?" the Sculptor pondered in the morning, frowning at the mass of clay before him, in his studio of the Piazza dell' Indipendenza, while graceful shapes were visible around him,—the fancies of an active brain already taking wing in plaster and marble. "Wherein exists perfect beauty save in form?" His fingers grasped the clay. He forgot time and place, hunger and thirst, as he wrought. His parched lips

repeated, mechanically, with Goethe: "Art still has truth, take refuge there."

When he closed his eyes, he beheld, as in a vision, a form rising from a block of purest Carrara marble, released by the magic of his own chisel, and winging its way over the sleeping earth.

"What is the ideal of the beautiful?" The Painter opened the sash and thus interrogated the tardy dawn.

His rest had been disturbed by haunting images, elusive and mocking, even as the sketches and pictures scattered about the *atelier* resembled the fragments of dreams.

"Wherein lies beauty save in color and light?"

He took up his palette, manipulating red through orange, yellow, blue, green, indigo, and violet. He sighed hopelessly. He saw Monte Morello, the adjacent slopes, and the valley beyond on an April afternoon, with rain-clouds and sunset contending for mastery of sky and rock.

"The colors of a paint-box are so muddy and dull in comparison with the pure tints of the heavens, the topaz, sapphire, and ruby, the hues without a name, the ineffable effulgence of glory."

The child laughed as he ate his oatmeal porridge. Transitions were without startling shocks to his years, and he had scarcely emerged from the fairyland of slumber. Later he ran about the paths to take counsel of the flowers, but the flowers were all dead. He knew the scarlet poppies, the daffodils, the hyacinths, and violets that bloomed here in the springtime, when the rosy almond blossoms mingle with the soft gray foliage of the olives. At length he found a tiny yellow bud of the cowslip tribe, and carried it to the Astronomer, who was pacing the terrace. "Here is a comet that grew in the grass," laughed the child.

The Astronomer accepted the gift, quoting:—

“Flowers are the alphabet of angels, whereby
They write on hills and fields mysterious truths.”

On Galileo's Tower, beneath the winter starlight, and with the mysterious comet visible above the hills, each of these men of diverse mould had grasped for a fleeting moment the ideal sought.

II. THE GOD MARS.

On the June morning the Archæologist strolls into the Street of the Watermelon, greets the Antiquarian, and disappears through the narrow door of the shop, in company with the proprietor and the attentive cat.

The Archæologist is a small, dry man, with refined features, clear eyes of a mild expression, and a gray Van-dyck beard. He is one of those unobtrusive persons who pass unnoticed in the crowd. The pedestrian may meet half-a-dozen little old men on the Florence pavement daily who closely resemble him. Of Slavic nationality, he comes with the winter, and when he once more departs northward he reminds one of the migratory birds, — the storks and the swallows. He vanishes until autumn frosts bring back the swallow *en route* for more distant shores, while his wings bear him no farther than the Arno bank.

The Archæologist is the happiest of all the frequenters of the Flower City. He is never slighted, bored, envious, or disappointed. The Florentine population reveals its best traits in his case. Assured of his friendly interest and sympathy by long experience, neither sharp-witted trickery nor mendicancy expect much of his slender purse. He is not rudely thrust aside or ignored on that account.

“He is not rich, but he has a good heart,” is the popular verdict on this foreigner. Florence allows him to have

his own way, responds with civility to his modest demands, respects his varied acquirements, and often discusses matters of history or of scientific research with him, at length. The Flower City is like Thackeray's mirror of society. Frown in a surly fashion, and it will readily return the hostile glance; smile, and the glass as speedily reflects your own amiability.

The antecedents of the Archæologist are known to few. One infers that a laborious life in college, library, shop, or the inheritance of some tiny legacy, on the borders of the Baltic Sea, has enabled him to realize his dreams, and seek Italy. He rents a furnished room, narrow and chill, in the household of a worthy chemist on one of the crooked streets in the rear of the Palazzo Vecchio. He rambles about the market-place, partaking of the food of the citizens, at a very trifling expense, much more frequently than he seeks a restaurant, or hotel *table d'hôte*; here tidbits of fish, *polenta*, artichoke, and the flowers of the squash. dipped in batter, frying to a crisp brown tint in the bubbling oil of the *casserole* over the charcoal brazier, in the door of the cook-shop, tempt him; there the portions of boiled ham, roast beef, Bologna sausage, and Gorgonzola cheese invite to a more substantial repast; or fruit, and all the delicate varieties of bread made by English, Swiss, or Viennese bakers await him. Possibly he accepts these trifles of daily life as possessing a deeper significance than the mere nourishment of the body. Thus he has been known to waylay the vender of candied fruit on the Trinità Bridge, and purchase the segments of sticky pears, or sugared oranges in the brass dish, not from any fondness for the delicacy, but because he traces a marked Etruscan origin of speech in the aspirated cry of "Caramella," rendered by the cockney Florentine as "Haramella." He has been further known to sit on a wall in the country by the hour, with the motive of beguiling an

intelligent young *contadino* to describe to him incidents of the last harvest season, in order to enjoy the picturesque of the language employed, and the felicitous turns of expression of this naïve son of the soil, so nearly akin to Latin sources in the mind of the listener. He invariably pauses to have his penknife sharpened on the wheel of the tall old knife-grinder who turns out gigantic feet in walking, at the angle of the fish footmen in "Alice in Wonderland," and whose deliberate, melodious call rings through the streets with the sweetness of a bell, marking an order of things passing away, in contrast with the harsh, jerking, and rapid utterance of a rising generation of the craft. He delights in a certain dexterous master of marionettes who exhibits his puppets in a shabby little theatre of a damp street lighted with a row of petroleum lamps, musing on the wit of Stentorello, the follies of the Neapolitan Polcinello, the pompous stupidities of the Bolognese doctor, while joining in the laughter of the children and the young soldiers of the audience. The shambling boot-black at the corner will wing his way on distant errands for the Archæologist, all for gratitude that the latter cured a cough with a mysterious powder contained in a folded paper, one severe season, and bestowed the coat taken from his own back in addition.

The stranger of the Swallow tribe is a friend of the middle-aged priest, a fellow-lodger in the apartment of the chemist, and deeply interested in the hardships of the routine of a parish celebrant. He is equally a friend of the Waldensian pastor from Torre Pellice in the Cottian Alps, who dwells on the next floor, and goes to hear him preach in a cold hall of the old town of a Sunday evening. He enjoys association with sundry professors, Oriental scholars, and scientists of noted liberality in all religious tenets. For the rest, he frequents the libraries, and attends the lectures of noted poets, philosophers, and

orators. He fulfils Ghiberti's summary: "He who has learned all is a stranger to nothing; without fortune, without friends, he is a citizen of all towns; he may disdain the vicissitudes of destiny."

Should you, in a moment of frivolous expansion, impart to the mild old gentleman some fresh items of the gossip ever eddying about an afternoon tea-party, — such as, that the Spanish count squandered the half of his bride's dowry at play last night, or the American matron of juvenile charms keeps already mature daughters in a French convent school, or the young Roman princess is known to be dying of tight-lacing, — he ejaculates, *sotto voce*: "Dear! dear!"

Do not imagine you are to escape a wholesome if gentle reprimand. In course of time you will receive a prim note containing a promised date, searched out in obscure archives, a Greek inscription translated, the rubbing taken from a municipal medal. A line will add: —

The things which are much valued in life are empty and rotten and trifling; and people are like little dogs biting one another, and little children quarrelling, crying, and then straightway laughing.

MARCUS AURELIUS.

A second admonition may assume this form: —

"I find this line of Sir Matthew Hale's in a portfolio: 'The intellectual faculty is a goodly field, capable of great improvement; and it is the worst husbandry in the world to sow it with trifles and impertinences.'"

Apart from the incidents of routine, and basking in southern sunshine in sheltered nooks of the Lung' Arno, the Cascine, the garden of the Fortezza, and on the terraces below the Piazza Michelangelo, white umbrella open, blue spectacles on nose, and book in hand, what does Florence represent to the Archæologist? He dwells in

thought and study in the past. To him this daughter of Rome, modified from the military camp of the field of flowers near the river into a town, was built on the design of the Eternal City. He finds vestiges of a Colosseum and of hot baths in the vicinity of Santa Croce, while the market-place was the capitol, and the Temple of Mars the rotunda, now converted into the Baptistery. The Archbishop's palace interests him, not for the antiquity of the original structure, or from the fact of Florence having been the seat of a bishop in the third century, but because of the uncovering of a Roman mosaic pavement on the site in restoring a court. He resembles the French philanthropist whose gaze was fixed on the remote portions of the globe. The eye of the Archæologist, accepting the present as an agreeable and passing pageant, searches ever beneath the crust of the years for records of vanished nations.

He emerges from the shop-door of the Antiquarian on the June morning, as a troop of Lancers pass along the narrow Street of the Watermelon, mounted, wearing glittering helmets, and carrying slender spears. He glances after the corps, and nods his head as he approaches the window. "The god Mars is abroad," is his greeting. "Let us sacrifice to the deity, if not the horse and the wolf, at least vultures and magpies. Surely the Flower City may have a little dog-grass left, for our purpose, from the blood-stained battlefields of the Middle Ages! These young Piedmontese are his followers. Florence has always been under his protection. *Mars vigila!*"

The little old man holds a gift in his hand which he has just discovered in the shop of the Antiquarian. This is a slender column of alabaster, with a base of graduated steps, and surmounted by a tiny bronze figure, with helmet, shield, and lance.

He has a fashion of bestowing presents on his friends. These usually come at the New Year, accompanied by a sprig of vervain, as the symbol of good wishes, and figs, dates, and honey in quaint receptacles. He adheres to the earliest period of Roman simplicity in these matters, and seldom degenerates into the gold ornaments and coins suppressed by Tiberius.

“Pagan that you are at heart, have you forgotten this is the 24th of June, and the Festa of San Giovanni Battista?”

The Archæologist chuckles as he adjusts the fragile ornament on a light table in the casement.

“Saint John and the god Mars!” he retorts. “Let us all seek the Baptistery, and admire once more the great silver table. Who knows when it will be for the last time?”

In the calendar of the year this June day was once the happiest festival to Florence. Feasting and music marked the term of preparations for the ceremony, sumptuous apparel was inspected, jewels polished, armor and standards made ready for the processions. Nobles of other parts of Tuscany were invited to join in the games and dances of the public squares, and the weeks sped away right merrily. On the day preceding the *festa*, at an early hour, all the Guilds of the Arts and the shops were decked with silk and cloth of gold and silver. The clergy and a body of monks carried the relics of the Baptist, marvellously adorned, and were accompanied by fifty secular companies, triumphant cars filled with musicians, angels and saints, in allegorical representations. The *gonfaloniere* walked two and two, the eldest first, bearing torches in their hands, going to make an annual oblation to the Baptist. Women, boys, and girls, dressed richly, and adorned with gems, went and came until the setting sun, — the waves of human life, color, pennants, and music

breaking against the old Temple of Mars that Arnolfo del Cambio dreamed of incrusting with new marbles.

On the morning of the *festa* the Piazza Signoria was decorated with flowers, triumphal arches, and one hundred trophies signifying the diverse places subject to the city. Armed men on horseback, and youths carrying lances pervaded the square. Around the *Ringhiera* of the Palazzo Vecchio the standards of the Guilds of the Arts were affixed to the iron rings with draperies of velvet, fur, and silk. Maidens danced before the Signory. How stately the burgher luxury! All the standards were carried later to the Baptistery with a tribute of wax candles.

The smaller Piazza of St. John was a paradise of flowers, draperies, and hangings adorned with lilies where dancing and singing were prolonged for three days. The modern pavilion prepared for royalty does not replace those vast tents of costly fabrics sown with gold stars and the embroidered standards of an earlier time.

No gay crowd haunts the *piazza* this morning, where Peter Martyr once preached. Only a fringe of mendicants, venders of rosaries and crosses, and idlers cluster about the portal through which a few early worshippers come and go. How incomparably magnificent the scene in the warm light of the summer morning! Out-of-doors the sun plays with golden reflections on every projection of Ghiberti's work, warms to rose porphyry columns, basks on the marble surface of the temple. Within the "gates of paradise," the vast space of tessellated pavement, the dim richness of gilded dome, with the intricate blending of mosaic pattern along arch and gallery unrolled, like some gigantic scroll, and the curious tombs are faintly revealed or capriciously concealed by the light of innumerable tapers.

In the midst the great silver table of the Baptist, weighing three hundred and twenty-five pounds, exhibited here

on this one day of the year, sparkles like a cone of rich design, and with superb effect in the pervading gloom. The rays of candles flicker over the twelve pictures illustrating the life of the Baptist in relief, the cornices of enamel, the pilasters, the statuettes in the niches of sibyls and prophets. In the midst the figure of the saint, one braccia in height, and weighing fourteen pounds, designed by Michelozzo di Bartolommeo, shines like a star.

Two soldiers, wearing helmets and holding swords, guard a treasure, the Dossale, made to rival that given to the Basilica of Constantinople by Constantine.

The Archæologist gazes about him with mild enjoyment of the scene, and puts a sugar pastille in his mouth.

"The human mind ever recurs to the original starting-point by some road," he murmurs. "Augustus melted the valuable gifts he received into golden idols for the temples. When this place was an open rotunda, Mars must have been yonder on his pedestal, a warrior mounted on his horse, and not in the chariot drawn by the steeds Famine and Terror, as he is often depicted. The Cæsar naturally ordered a temple, similar to that of Rome, erected in the provinces, and Florence was a Roman colony. Even Dante called these the people of Mars (*popolo di Marte*)."

"Your statue of Mars, removed to the other side of the river, fell in the floods of 1333, which destroyed the Ponte Vecchio, and was lost."

"What a pity!" he sighs.

"Constantine, Theodosius, and other Christian emperors ordered the rotunda converted into a Christian church. The Lombard queens, like Theolinda, were especially devoted to the worship of the Baptist."

Can it be possible that the Archæologist shrugs his shoulders as he bids us good-morning, and walks away in another direction?

The god Mars stood on the table in the window and was forgotten, as night fell with the Duomo looming in fiery splendor of illumination above the adjacent roofs and streets, the campanile sparkling and flashing beyond, and the opposite Baptistery wearing a diadem of twinkling lamps on its venerable head.

An unguarded movement in the casement was succeeded by the overturning of the table down the steps. Mars rolled on the floor, with the alabaster column shattered in many fragments, the pedestal dislodged, and the figure bereft of shield and spear. "What a pity!" The earlier exclamation of the Archæologist was echoed. "After all, Mars should make way for Christianity."

III. A BRANCH OF ALMOND BLOSSOMS.

The Botanist sends a gift to the Street of the Watermelon on the cold February morning, consisting of a branch of almond blossoms.

The gracious messenger of the hills possesses a double significance: it is a herald of the promise of spring, and an invitation to ascend the height of Bellosguardo at a stated hour of the afternoon, and admire the almond-tree in bloom.

Chilled frames expand as in an atmosphere of genial warmth, and frost-nipped fingers, cruelly distorted with chilblains, hasten to place the branch in a Chinese jar filled with water.

A faint glow, like the lining of certain sea-shells, and a scarcely perceptible perfume breathing of the freshly upturned soil and hedges, permeate the dark interior of the chamber. The fragility and delicate hues of all early flowers are represented by the slender dark branch covered with unfolding buds, and the brave, beautiful instinct of faith in the germ in the advent of spring. Of all the

manifold phases of loveliness assumed by the Flower City, the most attractive is garnishing her green mantle of the environs with the soft bloom of fruit-trees, — first, the almond, as January yields place to February, then the fluttering snow-white petals of the pear, succeeded by the rosy flush of the peach.

The branch of almond glorifies the casement and the entire street. The almond is Oriental in symbolism. If its name signified, in the biblical parlance, the “watcher,” the “hastener,” at the gates of spring, so it must be accepted as typical of the aspirations of the soul, waiting, yearning, longing for the harvest-time of perfected flower and fruit. The shape of the blossom was adopted as the pattern of the “cup” for the candles in the golden candlestick of the Temple at Jerusalem. The Mosaic record reads thus:—

“And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; and there shall be six branches going out of the sides thereof: three cups made like almond blossoms in one branch, a knop, and a flower; and three cups made like almond blossoms, a knop, and a flower.”

The candles burned from sunset to sunrise in the golden cups of the almond blossoms. What grandeur of sumptuous religious association for the humble spray in the porcelain vase!

Why should the token recall that a glass of honey, fragrant, and with a lingering scent of waxy cells in amber fluid, still stands on the breakfast-table, not because the queen is in the kitchen partaking of the delicacy with bread, but as bearing a label of the Apiario Ridolfi? Did these bees ever pay a humming visit to the Botanist, and sip the sweet nectar of his plants? The Apiary is situated on the road to Galluzzo, according to the label, and the laborious insects may readily call on a drowsy

summer day, on occasion, as we are about to do. The bees, pollen-laden in the precious hours, are on business of grave import, while we of the winter noon are the idle wasps. Can one of them have been a gigantic grandmother bee, with a plump body of metallic purple reflections, and gauzy black wings, calculated to frighten baby elves hiding in the pendent clusters of wisteria on a terrace of the slope the previous season?

The chief charm of places lies in their association with some event in the history of man.

Choose a way to the Arno bank when the sun is high, cross the Ponte Carraia, and by the Borgo San Frediano, pass out of the Porta San Frediano into the country. Fur-clad folk are abroad, if the resources of the wardrobe boast of sealskin, boa, or muff, while men of the poorer classes, loitering about the gate, wrap old cloaks around themselves shiveringly. The wind is piercing and most treacherous to human lungs. (Now is the season to offer a prayer in the little Church of the Madonna of the Coughs, *Madonna delle Tosse*, near the portal of San Gallo.) The encircling hills are marble white with snow; Fiesole has a bleak aspect; long belts of trees in the valley are leafless and brown as in Northern lands.

The Botanist dwells in the shadow of a convent wall, sheltered alike from the winds and the turmoil of the town. If the happiest of all men is he who finds the work for which he was created, and can do that for the rest of his life, the Botanist, in his modest nook, is at peace with all the world.

Following the road past a wayside shrine up the steep acclivity of Bellosguardo, an iron gate, painted green, with a small postern door adjacent in the wall, leads to his abode. The postern door is opened cautiously, after a preliminary scrutiny through the iron-work of the gate, by the gardener's wife. She is a tall, spare, hard-

featured woman, wearing a black-felt man's hat on her head, possibly because of the thinness of her gray hair. She resembles the wooden figure of Noah's wife in a toy Ark; and it would scarcely occasion surprise if she approached the house-door, slid back the varnished panel, and bade the speckled and painted animals to emerge stiffly in couples, instead of ushering a visitor into the presence of the tenant.

A long, low villa of cream-colored stucco faces the road and the city below, forming the lowest building of a group rising on terraces, ledges of wall, and the hillside to the pine-trees of the summit. The villa boasts of no pretence of stately elegance, like so many of its neighbors. The door is approached by a double flight of stone steps. Above the arch is an escutcheon of some extinct family, on which a pine-tree is discernible with three stars below. On one side is a stable where dwells a sedate pony, and through an adjoining grated casement flutter forth the fowls that own Noah's wife as their liege queen. On the other side of the door of entrance are the rooms tenanted by the gardener's family. The place has thus a rustic aspect, half farm and half mansion, which in nowise displeases the Botanist, himself most unobtrusive of occupants, who suffers the gardener to cultivate his grapes and lemons for market, and rare flowers for funerals, weddings, and baptism *fêtes*, quite unmolested, in the interests of the proprietor of the property; the goat and her kids to frolic on the slope; and the hens to cluck and quit the roost at all manner of unseemly hours, such as only Italian fowls would dream of doing, sleeping in silence through the day, oftentimes, and tumbling out at sunset, apparently none the worse for herding in-doors in the dark. Chanticleer, most superb of the birds of Central Asia, with golden tail held proudly erect, coral-red comb, and wings shading from copper, velvet-brown, and rus-

set to emerald-green, may first emerge, with the aspect of a gentleman about to seek his club for the evening, and is followed by a bevy of more or less plebeian wives, in dun or drab feathers and topknots, with the odd effect of bustling housewives with mob-caps awry, and assumed in a hurry. These last, despite their irregular habits, yield abundant eggs to Noah's wife, which the worthy matron sells around the corner of the wall, hidden beneath her apron, mindful of spying and possibly tale-bearing *contadini*.

Venerable olive-trees and gnarled figs grow in untrammelled luxuriance on the knoll and the hillside. The little almond-tree, starred with sprays of pink blossoms, rises like a sentinel on the grassy path.

The Botanist, occupying the upper portions of the villa, above the pony and the fowls, retreats to the rear, or southern side of the enclosure, at this season of the year, where in the half-open *loggia* of his predilection, rambling about the lemon-house and curiously primitive buildings, — scarcely more than a shelter from frost, with tiled roof, — or seated below the chrome-tinted expanse of wall of the boundary terrace, he may be said to live under glass, like the most sensitive plants. Only in the balmy afternoons of May, the June twilight, or the late summer night when bands of youth from the crowded town feast on water-melon, with laughter and song, on the space of public greensward near the Church of San Vito below, does he frequent the realm of the almond-tree and the olives in the front portions of the habitation.

The banquet to which the almond branch summoned you is spread, presided over by an urbane host, and served by the solemn old Joachim.

The Botanist is a large, loosely limbed man, addicted to eccentric raiment that floats about him, as he moves, in ample folds. If one happens to meet him driving, he is

invariably surrounded by plants in pots, and if on foot, his capacious pockets reveal the tops of furzy fronds and bundles of dried flowers. Occasionally he pauses in the Street of the Watermelon, in a mood of excitement, having chanced upon some rare blossom or leaf in an obscure corner of the Botanical Garden; which he wishes to paint before it fades. He is as careful of his water-color sketches as was the Florentine of the past century, Tommaso Chellini, who at his villa at Scandicci thus mirrored plant life with the aid of his brush.

Our host's hair is gray, and worn long so that it mingles with an abundant beard; his features are irregular and accentuated. The color burns somewhat too vividly in his hollow cheek, and the brilliancy is feverish of his dark eyes. If asked where his country lies, he would point to the heavens, like Anaxagoras. The French caricaturist who designed the kingly countenance of Louis Philippe in a pear would have inevitably portrayed the Botanist as one of those long sinewy roots from which mossy filaments float, a human semblance being readily imparted by the carver's skill. As for Joachim,—servant, foster-brother, assistant,—thin, wrinkled, and brown, he looks as if he were laid away between the blotting-leaves of press or herbarium to dry at times.

Science is a golden key that opens doors wholly inaccessible to wealth, worldly power, beauty; therefore to be the guest of the Botanist is a true distinction. The branch of almond blossoms must have served as the open sesame here.

The sunlit and sun-warmed room is as simple in appointment as the manners of the host are unaffected. The floor is of red brick tiles, with a thick covering of native drugget, or *stoja*, spread under the table. The meal is composed largely of elements commended by Xenophanes on similar occasion:—

"Now the floor is cleanly swept; the hands of the guests washed; the cups shine brightly on the board. Woven wreaths and fragrant myrrh are carried around by attendants. Wine is kept in reserve, and honey in jars, smelling of flowers. Frankincense breathes forth its perfumes on the revellers, and cold water, sweet and pure, waits at their side. Loaves, fresh and golden, stand upon the table, which groans with cheese and honey."

In the centre of the board a second branch of almond blossoms has been placed in a Japanese vase.

"There will be the fewer green almonds for the children to munch this season," the Botanist suggests slyly, as he accepts a portion from the dish proffered by the silent Joachim. "Butter of the cow, cheese of the ewe, and *ricotta* of the goat, eh, Joachim? We know how to live up here, Arcadian shepherds that we are! How goes the Tuscan jingle? 'January and February hold to poultry; March and April choose kid; May and June eat salad, cabbage, and mushrooms; July and August roasted pigeons; September and October hare with sauces; November and December good meats always!'"

The host does not perplex unlearned visitors by employing what is disrespectfully termed the jargon of science on his favorite "phanerogams" and "cryptogams." He has often travelled to the islands of the Danube, through Bohemia, Styria, Transylvania, and Carinthia, in pursuit of study, accompanied by the faithful and intelligent Joachim. He is never weary of making excursions to the Falterona, Vernia, Camaldoli, Mont Amiata, and Pietrasanta. He has found the *Globularia humullinia repens*, rare in Tuscany, but which flourishes in the Pyrenees of France. He has gathered valerian on the Island of Gorgona and at the foot of Monte di San Giuliano, and creeping vines of certain value in the woods of the Island of Elba. At one time he haunts the

cork groves of the Maremma, and again he rambles like some lonely aquatic bird on the Lidi of Venice, questioning the lagoons as to their treasures of tangled marine weed and sandy roots, or on the shores of Pesaro and Rimini, scrutinizing the harvest of the Adriatic waves.

In the shadow of the convent wall, in the *loggia* which contains chairs and a table, Joachim places coffee and tiny glasses, with a flask of greenish-golden Chartreuse. A desk in the corner holding writing materials and a quantity of specimens of double poppies, the globe daisy, aconite, bear's ears, myrtle berry, a meadow mushroom, rosemary, *Euphorbia verrucosa*, and heliotrope indicate that the occupant does not spend all his time here in idle revery. Nor are these, partially dissected, the sole evidence of industry on the spot. A fine collection of the petrifications of Parma, Vincenza, and Verona is arranged on shelves on one side of the enclosure. Specimens of spider's silk are outspread on black cloth in a glass case, together with a roll of manuscript and several volumes of reference as to the chemical analysis and the utility of the insect's web.

"If you sip this, the spirit of the place will take possession of you, the very atmosphere pervade all your senses," said the Botanist, pouring a few drops of the cordial into the fragile receptacle. "I dream here of a vanished colony of wise and tranquil monks, who once dwelt in the monastery above. A villa full of the laughter of children, now? Yes, but surely the building was conventual, with cloister and garden. They must have been Benedictines, my ghostly friends, for they made this *liqueur* out of pungent herbs, mellowed in the sunshine. They kept bees, and understood the insects. The gardener's wife has a few hives, and we all dwell in harmony, each respecting the rights of the other."

Silence ensues as the eye roams over the scene. The

lower parapet of the garden is bordered with ornamented pots, painted yellow and coral-red, which are filled with marigolds in August. Large urns of majolica, white-washed, border the paths, receptacles of the lemon-trees in summer, when delicate convolvulus, pink and purple, bloom about their roots. Beyond is a tunnel of laurel leading to arches covered with trained vines and a fountain of salmon-tinted terra-cotta. A larch-tree sways in the wind that does not reach our nook. The straw-plant, the immortelle, grows in profusion in the adjacent beds, reddish-purple, yellow, exquisite amber, and pearly-white. The dry cough of the Botanist unhappily interrupts reverie.

"My convent wall always reminds me of the Transfiguration," he muses. "On the summit of the height, wonder, glory, and even peace are attained, while in the foreground, the city yonder, doubt, turmoil, and clamor prevail."

The little almond-tree braves the icy wind of the terrace, and flaunting the rosy harbinger of spring, welcomes us. "For my part, I prefer the mulberry to the almond," the Botanist affirms, plucking a blossom, and slowly shredding apart the petals. "The mulberry was the device of the upstart Ludovico Sforza, you remember, as emblematic of the sudden yielding of flower and fruit together."

"You care for this almond-tree?"

"Yes. There are ninety-four varieties of the almond, I believe. However, I know little concerning trees. Alas! I can climb no higher than mosses, lichens, and fungi, in my day."

Is this humility of ignorance real or feigned? Does he delight in Goethe's theories? Noah's wife approaches him with a brimming goblet of warm goat's milk. Noah hovers in the rear, smiling and good-humored. He is a stumpy man with a bronzed face. He was born on the

property, as was his father before him, and he has known several changes of rulers, yet his cheerfulness as a fatalist does not depart from him.

Glance back at the bend of the road. The Botanist is visible standing beside the almond-tree, sipping the goat's milk. "The day of days, the great day of the feast of life, is that in which the inward eye opens to the unity of things."

Who may doubt that the Botanist is a guest at the banquet?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GRASSHOPPER'S FESTIVAL.

THE dismal blackbird has a rival in the window. Gentle reader, did you ever happen to own a cage, neatly made of wire and wood, scarcely two inches in height? Surely a very tiny bird must dwell in such a liliputian mansion. Are you familiar with the song of the grasshopper race? *Tri, tri, tri!* For how many centuries have the boys of Florence heard the little stridulous rasping of wing-cases on vibrating membrane, producing the well-known insect chirp, mingling with their dreams on the eve of Ascension Day!

The rival of the blackbird is a black cricket, or *grillo*. In outward aspect he is a scarcely less doleful prisoner than the wild bird, as he sits on a morsel of salad-leaf in the second story of his house, the lettuce couch alone preventing him from falling through into the cellar. On Ascension Day in Florence the cricket, called a *grillo*, is captured, put in such a cage, and sold in the streets for a few pence. Ascension Day signifies here the festival of the grasshopper. The lower classes, especially the children, rise at dawn to gain the Cascine, where the turf is fresh, and the long avenues are clothed with the delicate green foliage of the Italian springtime. The crowd seeks the meadows where the cricket is just born. The fun has not the zest of past years, yet capturing and possibly tormenting the hapless insects is a pastime congenial to

the boys and young men. When caught, pranks are played with the *grillo*. Put in the wee cages for sale, games of betting ensue as well, as to which insect will jump farthest along the ground, or to the greatest height in the air. Carried home to dark houses on narrow streets, if the cricket chirps gayly as a prisoner, the visit will bring good luck to the domicile.

How did the usage originate? When did youth begin to search for the grasshopper family in the dewy meadows on Ascension Day? The custom seems to have been lost in the obscurity of time. Doubtless pagan children enjoyed the festival under another name, that of some deity of the mythological calendar. Did Fiesole, the Ancient Mother, send her rosy and riotous brood of urchins down to the banks of the Arno and the Mugello in spring weather of cloud and sunshine, to catch crickets, incarcerate them in tiny cages, and derive symbolical interpretation of good or evil for the household out of the song of the captive? The Ancient Mother, as Etruscan, crowned with her proper emblem, the crescent moon, and wearing on her robes the golden ornament, the Octopus, may not have cherished the grasshopper as did the Greeks, as the stork is always dear to Germany, or the robin to England; still the *grillo* hunt must be associated, in some sort, with such anniversaries as the firing of the car of Ceres in the square in front of the Duomo, on the Saturday before Easter, if kindled with the fire carried from the church altar, as possessing a classical signification now materialized or lost. And the religious associations? In a land of early Christian art or Renaissance effulgence, where stately pictures of the Ascension abound in dim, rich museums, and Luca della Robbia groups recur to the mind at the mention of the day, how did the grasshopper put in a claim to such public recognition, unless as giving excuse for a spring holiday? Fain would he have escaped

notoriety, our poor *grillo*! His lament to this day is that of the epigram of the "Anthology":—

"Why, ruthless shepherd, from my dewy spray,
In my lone haunt, why tear me thus away?"

"Follow a fly from the cradle to the grave," suggested an American bishop of a humorous disposition to the writer of these pages, one August day, on the coast of Rhode Island.

Was it for the sad fate of hanging in his cage in the Florence Window, on the dark and narrow Street of the Watermelon, that the cricket emerged from the egg, was wrapped in the pupa of a second sleep, and finally skipped forth as a perfect insect to enjoy the day in the grass of the Cascine? The droll little prisoner was bought on the market-place, gazing out dolefully between the bars of his fairy mansion. He looked hot and tired. Oh, how he must have longed for the vast grasshopper forests of the Cascine meadows! "Shall we take the poor thing back to the shrubbery?" questions the zealous member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"He must be kept over one night, at least, to sing for good luck," demurs domestic superstition. "Besides, on Ascension Day the *grillo* would only be caught again, and possibly undergo the tortures of the Inquisition at the hands of a new owner."

"Horrible! Perhaps he is thirsty, though!" Crumbs of sugar were thrust between the wires of the cage, as a canary might have been tempted. Then a shower of waterdrops were made to trickle down, as if it were raining, with the combined aid of a sponge and a tea-spoon, in order to refresh the occupant. From time to time a cherry or a strawberry was offered in kindly fashion, but the cricket's appetite proved to be small. The blackbird failed to notice the rival, after a preliminary, sharp

glance of inquiry, as if wondering if the *grillo* might not be a plump morsel to eat.

When the twilight fell and shadows filled the street, the embrasure, the chamber within, the cricket moved a feeler in the air, nodded a tiny brown head, and nibbled the morsel of lettuce. Then the insect uttered a doubtful chirp, as if expressing thanks for all food received. The blackbird hopped on his perch, pecked a seed supper vigorously in an excess of astonishment, gave up the enigma, and settled into a ball of feathers for the night.

"*Tri, tri, tri!*" chirped the *grillo*, and the crystal clear note penetrated the darkness of night, receiving response from fellow-captives in adjacent courts and gardens. In the morning we take the wee cage from the nail, and swaying it on one finger by the ring, seek the Cascine. Oh, the tranquil beauty of the spot on a cloudless spring morning, just deepening into summer!

On one side the river flows along in a turbid current; on the other the country extends to the range of hills, with the near slopes of Monte Morello clothed in mossy green, the towers, castles, and villas scattered along the base shining in the clear, early light. Yonder are the race-course where fashion occasionally gathers, the charming enclosure of the lawn-tennis ground, and the circular space shielded by the canvas that did not serve to conceal the automatic movements, in rehearsal, of the cavaliers who rode a tournament on the occasion of the *fête* of the completed Duomo.

Beyond are the thick cool hedges, long vistas of avenues of lofty and venerable trees full of shadowy mystery, — beeches, pine, ilex, dense masses of evergreen, the light ripple of poplars against the blue sky. Overhead the birds — lark, thrush, or blackbird — hold a carnival of matutinal melody, incomparably more lovely than the metallic clang of the afternoon military band. In the

bird concert, without audience, high notes pierce the leafy dome as if taking flight into the sunny air from tiny throats, and are sustained by trills of more subdued warblings below, or drowned in the gushing outburst of many rivals, intoxicated by the sweetness of their own song and the triumphant joys of living.

Always suggestive of the Austrian and Lorraine rule of the Duchy of Tuscany, the Belvidere and buildings of the original Cascine stand silent. Maria Theresa, in person blooming, stately, and sagacious, might step forth from a mimic temple with a white dome and columns to commend her son, the excellent Leopold I., for his labors to improve the condition of the people and the land, as she gave advice to her daughter, Marie Antoinette, on the throne of France, yet a school-girl in the maternal eyes.

The plane-trees extend to the termination of the park on the right hand, distinguishable at a distance by the curious whitish bark and the deep shadow cast on the road by leaves growing umbrella-wise. Brought over the Ionian Sea to the Island of Diomedes, and thence to Sicily and Italy, the ancients may have venerated the plane-tree in certain localities, pouring libations of wine about the roots; but the modern valetudinarian, reputed to dread discovering malaria in the beds of roses of the garden, fears the pollen of the blossoms of the early season shed abroad on every breeze in the long avenues by the classical stranger.

Does the Florentine of a middle or a superior class ever fish in the Arno? Surely not with the zeal of the Parisian, who persistently haunts the bridges of the Seine at all seasons of the year. A few men and boys may lounge on the parapet of the Lung' Arno with a rod, or a listless crowd watch the dipping of a net at the weir, or the *contadino* haunt sandy reaches of shore down to Pisa,

nude, and swinging the meshes of his *reticella* over the water by a dexterous movement learned of his ancestors, holding the cord between his teeth; but where is the Pliny, meditating beside lake or river, previous to dining on plump thrushes, wild asparagus cut from beneath the vines, with fresh eggs, and the comic actor appearing after the dessert? The Arno, flowing past the Cascine, and possibly Florence, lacks this element.

The cricket in the cage has no idea of the good fortune in store for him. We have followed the Via Cerretani and the Via Panzani to the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, crossed the space, and walked the length of the Via della Scala to the Cascine Gate. We stroll through the English garden, redolent of flowers, without pausing at the little *châlet* to take coffee or an ice at one extremity, or the pond of the other, overhung with trembling ferns, haunt of the gold-fish among the lilies below. The central avenues soon lead to the realm of meadows.

The place is deserted, hushed, beautiful, in the early freshness of day and season. Equestrians are rare. An occasional velocipedist skims past, like a phantom insect of grotesque proportions. The babies are not yet abroad in poke bonnets and quaint cloaks, babbling all modern tongues, in charge of nurses and governesses. Do foreign maidens still haunt the depths of the thickets in search of clematis and wild flowers, having given a rendezvous to their gallant partners of the ball of last night, all in the springtime?

In the tree-tops overhead the birds trill their hymn of praise, and the god Priapus, armed with his willow scythe, reigns in these sylvan solitudes, undisturbed, as lord of the flowers.

The *piazzale* gained, we placed the cage on the ground beside the hedge and drew up the wire which forms the door of the prison. The *grillo* advanced his head cau-

tiously, and then hopped off into the grass as fast as his legs would carry him.

"*Tri, tri, tri!*" chirped all the little cricket-people, by way of welcome.

Happy crickets! Ascension Day was over.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE ARNO.

ON the Arno! Do not the words recall a familiar scene with the distinctness of an etching?

The length of quay curving in the distance to the cloud of foliage of the Cascine, the Piazza Manin midway, with the monument of the Venetian patriot in the centre, the weir and circular abutment of parapet opposite the Hotel de la Paix, and the bronze statue of Garibaldi flanking an orange-colored building beyond, — all these features belong to one of the world's most renowned thoroughfares. Who does not remember, in a much-travelled age, the leisurely holiday crowd of the Lung' Arno, ebbing and flowing mothers and daughters in their best attire, the babies straggling behind, all prepared to gaze at the passing carriages and their occupants, the ladies in fresh Paris toilettes? A Florentine throng this, worthy of a passing contemplation, renowned for epigram and repartee, keen-eyed, mocking, ready to detect and laugh at any absurdity or weakness, could one but hear and understand the winged sarcasm as it passes from lip to lip. It is, also, a populace not too trustworthy on such occasions as the languidly recurring Carnival, being more prone to hurl missiles than flowers. No doubt there is an Arlotto Pievano, with a ready jest, in a group of priests taking a walk at the sunset hour. No doubt there may be a barber Burchiello abroad with his family to-day, ready to keep alive a little gayety in a careworn and depressed world by

his own trolling songs. The old men are abroad to enjoy the day. The aged Florentine citizen of the middle class is a most interesting type, a certain refinement tempering the shrewdness and intelligence of shrivelled features. Behold him on the Arno, serene, amused, and respectable, as retired merchant, goldsmith, optician, shoemaker. He is also a citizen of the world, the old Florentine, and astonished at nothing new, having seen many pageants. On such occasions the beggars, wrapped in cloaks as withered as themselves, have crept out to warm chilled blood in the sun on the benches opposite the Carraia Bridge. The three blind match-venders, granted a long life of misery, stand in their accustomed places before the Corsini Palace. The peasant women from the Abruzzi, in their picturesque costume, and with gold ear-rings depending beside their brown cheeks, form a spot of warm color near the weir,—red, green, and yellow,—with their pile of blankets exposed for sale, wherewith to deck draughty doorway of hotel or *pension*, or to drape the bleak walls of an apartment corridor. These wily sirens knit as they watch for the traveller, to extort a higher price for their wares than need be paid for the same article in the carpet-shops. The flower-venders circulate beneath the balconies of the hotels, with coaxing smiles, equally sure of their prey,—the stranger intoxicated with their burden of sweetness and color.

Who does not remember the night on the Arno? If masculine, you took a fresh cigar, and strolled forth after the dull *table d'hôte*, instead of seeking theatre or opera. The Lung' Arno was silent and deserted, with the lights of the gas lamps reflected in the river, the stars and the moon shining in the sky. The Arno glided along swiftly, with sparkling crests of foam visible occasionally,—a stream devoid of volume or steadiness, descending from the mountain height of the

Falterona, traversing the Casentino amid vineyards and olive-trees, and pressing onward freer in course, if you will, because the Libyan Hercules once removed the rock, at Signa, which formed a marsh. In the shadows of evening the river has a quiet and pensive beauty of aspect. Never could the traveller apply to the famous current Dante's scornful epithets, as, "rising meanly among swine more fit for acorns than human food," reaching the "snarling curs of Arezzo," thence flowing to the "abode of wolves at Florence," and finally descending to the "foxes full of fraud" at Pisa. "The ill-starred ditch" has an appearance of innocence and tranquillity beneath the stars. In the shades of midnight memories may stir abroad of Buonconte da Montefeltro swept down by the overflow of the Archiano, after the battle of Campaldino, of the ashes of Savonarola cast to the tide from the Ponte Vecchio, of the key of the Famine Tower dropped into the wave at Pisa by the Archbishop Ruggieri. Possibly a guitar twanged farther up the street, and a singer rendered some Neapolitan ditty in a heavy bass voice. A sullen splash beneath the Ponte Carraia suggested a suicide. The Duomo bell boomed out a few hurried strokes on the still night. Was it a summons for the Misericordia to seek the suicide on the opposite shore?

If feminine, you assuredly strayed as far as the Piazza del Duomo to admire, in a sentimental mood, the marble statues and columns, glorified by the moon.

This is one of the world's thoroughfares, with open spaces visible, of sky, mountain, and open country beyond the suspension bridge, such as no other street, flanked by lofty buildings, churches, and squares, can boast. Not less curious and interesting is the throng of sojourners to be met on this quay. A tide of strangers traverses this pavement each season, and vanishes again. Every stage of peevish invalidism, following the advice of Mr. Wortley

Montagu; rosy brides, native and foreign; mothers and daughters, chiefly Anglo-Saxon, and with an abstracted expression often, as of grasping at shadows, having missed the substance in some fashion; and whole phalanxes of the "glorified spinster," skurrying out of the doorways of *pensions*, always under the pressure of utmost speed of locomotion, — such are elements of the winter day on the Arno. Eccentric types abound at all seasons, — the old gentleman of parchment visage, who walks for his health, with mechanical precision of gait; the old gentleman, bewigged, rouged, attired with juvenile gayety of taste, suggestive of a bygone generation of club-man of Regent Street or Cheltenham; the old lady, whether of the faded furbelow species of the keepsake album, or fantastic and flighty and from the provinces.

In addition, the great of the earth like to walk on the Arno, *incognito*. A king, travelling in Italy for the benefit of his health, or to change secretly his religion, as gossip affirms, occupies yonder hotel balcony. A fallen emperor, eager to test all the fresh discoveries of science, is lodged farther on. A slender lady in black, accompanied by a female companion, may prove to be the Empress of Austria, or the elderly lady in a plain carriage the Queen of England.

De Stendhal said, "The brain is a magic lantern at which one can play for one's own amusement."

Rain fell on the umbrella as the Street of the Watermelon was left to seek the Arno bank in a time of flood. The Lung' Arno gained, the rain ceased, and the umbrella was closed. Promenaders were abroad to gaze at the river, already swollen to a tawny current, brimming from bank to bank, pouring through the arches of the bridges with a menacing violence of volume, and boiling in a mimic cataract at the weir. To-day the bridges hold firm, — first, the Ponte Carraia, which we might christen the

Arch of Light, for the countless spectacles of which it has been the scene; then, the Ponte Trinità, the Arch of Symmetry, Ammanati's best title to fame in elegance and simplicity of design; then the old treasure bridge, most precious historical link of all, tottering under the weight of shops and gallery; and finally, Ponte alle Grazie, Arch of Gratitude, modern, spacious, and without especial character since despoiled of the central chapel where was once the miraculous Madonna della Grazie, dear to the *contadini*, and the cells where the nuns dwelt.

The scene was sombre, — heavy clouds swept low, and the olive slopes below the Villa Niccolini on the Bellosguardo height were ragged and black. A group of spectators stood at the weir, their faces overshadowed by painful reminiscences, like the sky.

"See what human skill can achieve," said the Engineer, complacently, indicating the hydraulic works of the Arno.

A Hungarian shook his head. "Fire can be dominated, but water is the great destroyer."

An Italian added, "When will the Po and the Adige be taught to wear a bridle by engineering?"

An American woman added in a low tone, "You know little about floods in Europe. The Mississippi swallowed our all, five years ago."

In such weather the scene of the great flood recurs to the memory with a peculiar vividness and power. Literally translated, the paragraph of Villani seems discursive to the limit of incoherence, yet is thrilling:—

"In the year of Christ 1333, in the Calends of November, the city of Florence, being in great prosperity and in a happy and good condition, better than she had been since the year 1300, thanks to God, as, by the mouth of Christ, says his Evangelist Vigilate, for you know not the hour of the Judgment of God, which was sent on our city; when at the Ognissanti [All Souls] commenced the rain for Florence and all the surrounding coun-

try, and on the Alps, and the mountains ; and this continued for four days and four nights, the rain increasing in an unusual manner, so that the cataracts of the sky appeared to have been opened ; and with this rain continued frequent and frightful thunder and lightning, and the lightning fell sufficiently often. Therefore all people lived in great fear, ringing continually the bells of the city that the water might not rise ; and in each house basins and buckets were used, and great cries circulated to God for mercy on those in peril, the inmates of the houses fleeing from roof to roof, making bridges of the buildings ; and the noise and the tumult were so loud that the sound of the thunder was scarcely audible."

Owing to this unusual rain, the Arno speedily showed those instincts of chafing agitation within customary boundaries so characteristic of narrow Southern streams.

The increased volume of water first descended the hills with violence, submerging much of the plain of the Casentino, and then completely covering those of Arezzo, and the Upper Valdarno. Trees, mills, houses built on the banks, and stores of grain were swept away by the ruthless destroyer, human beings and animals perishing by the score. Thus the menacing yellow wave, advancing in the guise of a most terrible foe on Florence, acquired additional force from the tributary stream of the Sieve, and all the plain of the Mugello was speedily flooded. At the hour of Vespers, on the 4th of November, the wave reached the town, pouring over the whole district of San Salvi and of Bisarno, to a depth above the fields of six braccia, and even of eight and ten braccia, then swept on with ever-increasing power, penetrating the city the more readily by the Porta alla Croce, and that of the Renaio, for the dilapidated state of certain sluices belonging to mills. Villani continues thus:—

"And in the first sleep of the night, the communal wall above the Corso dei Tintori was broken in as far as the front of

the dormitory of the Frati Minori [Franciscans] for the space of one hundred and thirty braccia, by which breach the Arno flowed the more easily into the town, and shed such an abundance of water that, having first beaten in and ruined the quarters of the Frate Minori, the whole city from there to the usual channel of the Arno was covered; generally the streets were invaded and more or less inundated, but most in the quarter of San Piero Scheraggio, and the gate of San Piero and the gate of the Duomo, in such a manner that those who read of it in future times will comprehend the end, the information taken being sure and notable."

That terrible and resistless yellow wave glided into the Cathedral and the Baptistery, the water rising up to the story above the altar, higher than halfway up the column of porphyry before the door of the latter temple. In Santa Reparata, the foe climbed even to the arch of the ancient vault below the choir, and threw down the column with the cross of Saint Zenobius, which is in the *piazza*. In the Palace of the People (Palazzo Vecchio), where the priors met, the steps of the entrance were submerged, although the adjacent Via Vacchereccia is deemed about the highest spot in Florence. In the Palace of the Comune (Bargello), where dwelt the *podestà*, the tide rose in the court six braccia. The main altar of the Badia of Florence suffered an overflow, as well as that of the Frate Minori; while in the Church of Or San Michele, and the Old and New Markets, the depth exceeded two braccia.

The chronicler of disaster pursues: —

"And it rose in the Oltrarno, in the streets along the river, to a great height, and especially in San Niccolò, and in the Borgo Pidiglioso, and in the Borgo San Friano, and the Camaldoli, with great desolation for the poor and humble people who inhabit the ground-floors. In the *piazza* it reached as far as the streets traversing the limit, and in Via Maggio as far as



San Felice. And on this same Thursday, at the hour of Vespers, the force and mass of the Arno broke the water-gate of Ognissanti, and a large portion of the Comune was flooded, and in the rear of the Borgo San Friano in two parts, for the space of more than five hundred braccia; and the tower of the guard which was on the top of the wall was nearly beaten down. And the said sluice of the Ognissanti being demolished, the Carraia Bridge fell, except two arches on the side. And, unable to bear the pressure, the Trinità Bridge crumbled in a similar fashion, save one pile and one arch on the side of the church; and then the Ponte Vecchio, crowded, or jammed, by the wreckage of the Arno with trees and logs, as well as the strength of the Arno, which flowed above the arches, and the houses and shops which were on it, and by the weight of the water, was crushed and ruined wholly, so that there remained standing only two piles in the middle. And at the Rubaconte (Ponte alle Grazie), the Arno overleaped the arch at the side, and broke the parapet in part, and penetrated other places and broke, and brought to the ground the palace of the Castle Altafronte, and a great portion of the houses of the Comune Sopr' Arno from the said castle to the Ponte Vecchio. And there fell into the Arno the statue of Mars, which was on the column at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio on the other side. And note this of Mars, that the ancients said and left in writing: when the statue of Mars falls and perhaps moves, the city of Florence will be in great peril and suffer alteration. And Mars fell, and many houses from the Ponte Vecchio to the Carraia; and finally the mill-dam along the Arno was swept away, and the Borgo San Jacopo, and all the streets Lung' Arno, here and there, were ruined. He who gazed upon the demolition saw almost a chaos; and similar damage occurred to many houses badly built in other parts of the city. And if during the night the communal wall of the Prato of Ognissanti had not given away for the distance of four hundred and fifty braccia, by which breach the water collected in such abundance that all the city was full and ever-increasing, and assuredly the city would have been in great peril had the quantity doubled; but the breaking of the said wall

allowed the water in the city to return with violence to the Arno, and the flood lessened, and in the city beyond the channel of the Arno on Friday, at the hour of Vespers, leaving the city, and all the streets, and the shops, and cellars, — of which there are many in Florence, — full of pestilential mud, such as could not be removed in six months ; and nearly all the wells of Florence were spoiled, and it was necessary to rebuild them by the bed of the Arno. And succeeding the same deluge near the city toward the west, all the plain of Legnaia and Ognano and of Settimo, of Ormannoro, Campi, Brozzi, Sanmoro, Peretola, and Miccioli as far as Signa, and the country of Prato was covered by the Arno in abundant quantity, injuring fields and vineyards, bearing away masonry, and the houses, and mills, and many people, and nearly all the cattle ; and then passed Montelupo and Capraia, and by the addition of more rivers, which below Florence flowed into the Arno, which, every one, rose angrily, ruining all their bridges. In a similar manner, and to a larger extent, the Arno covered and destroyed the Lower Valdarno, and Pontormo and Empoli and Santa Croce and Castelfranco ; and a great part of the walls of this territory were demolished, and all the plain of San Miniato, and of Fucecchio, and Montetopoli, and of Marti al Pontadera. And arrived at Pisa, all was immersed, if not for the ditch Arnonico, and of the Borgo alle Capanne in the marsh ; which marsh made a wide and deep channel to the sea, which was not previously there, and on the other side of Pisa invaded the Osoli, and mingled with the river Serchio ; but with all this, Pisa was flooded, and much damage done, and all the plain of the Val di Serchio at Pisa was spoiled, but then much land was left unharmed to the great utility of the country. This deluge did infinite injury to the city and environs of Florence ; to three hundred persons, great and small, which afterward was thought to exceed three thousand ; and of cattle a great quantity ; of ruined bridges, houses, and mills, in vast numbers, so that there remained not a bridge over any river or ditch that was not broken ; in loss of merchandise, cloths of wool of the country, and of harness, and of masonry, and not less of full casks, nearly all destroyed ;

and also the seeds of grain, and flour for the houses, with the loss of all sown, and the damage to lands and fields; which if the masses of water covered and spoiled, the hills, and the stones, descending, tore up, and carried away the good earth."

In Florence the flood occasioned great fear and admiration, none doubting that it was the judgment of God for sins committed; therefore most citizens turned to prayer and meditation and penance. On the other hand, the philosophers and astrologers argued that the disaster was merely the course of Nature. The superstitious drew unfavorable auguries from a recent eclipse of the sun. The momentous event elicited a letter of condolence from King Robert of Sicily to the afflicted city, which moved the profound gratitude of the commonwealth apparently. The missive, too lengthy for quotation, is surely one of the most piously edifying documents ever indited by royalty for the benefit of a flood-swept town. King Robert clearly deduces that when we suffer tribulation from any cause, the trials are our correction. He quotes Solomon, Daniel, and Saint Augustine in support of his homily. The monarch wrote under his own private seal at Naples.

The rain began to beat on the umbrella once more; the ladies entered their carriages and drove away; the children were huddled under shelter. The group of spectators at the weir had departed. The yellow river rolled on, and the clouds swept low across the zenith.

On the Arno! What a throng of association the very words evoke, — from the English statesman who wished his remains brought to the Flower City for stately sepulchre, wherever he might die, to the latest amateur who wields brush or pencil leaning on the parapet, and the artist whose needle etches a design of a cluster of poplars, a campanile, a badia, and a bend of shore in the direction of melancholy Pisa, framed in pine-trees.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WINDOW CLOSED.

SUMMER and early autumn once more return, and Italy has celebrated her *fêtes* of the Assumption of August and La Donna of September.

Life flows on in an uneventful current in the narrow street between the Cathedral and the monastery of St. Mark.

Time was when the citizens came forth to sit on the stone benches, and gossip in the twilight. The human tongue was the chief medium of communicating the latest intelligence, good or evil. Telegraph and telephone did not exist. Now the *carbonajo*, — having stored the latest freight of timber from the hills around Perugia, and the bags of charcoal from the heights beyond Vallombrosa, for the winter, — the antiquarian, and the bookseller each read a favorite daily journal. Thirsting for “news as fresh as the coin of the mint,” the sheet in the hand of the *carbonajo* is the “Fieramosca,” that of the bookseller the “Nazione,” and the preference of the dealer of *bric-à-brac* the “Vedetta.”

The cats pause on their respective thresholds, glancing up and down the thoroughfare. The eccentric English-woman, wearing her flowered shawl and big bonnet, rambles along, pausing to feed each pet animal with a dainty morsel taken from her capacious pocket.

The convent of San Marco, the campanile, the wide Piazza Signoria, bask in the hot sunshine. The graceful

tower of the Palazzo Vecchio still indicates the spot of Savonarola's sufferings. In the cool shadow of the Church of the Lily, Michelangelo's group of the dead Christ held by his followers rises in the dim obscurity at the back of the choir and beneath the vast space of dome.

The old Bargello, silent and deserted at this season, treasures the Luca della Robbia groups singing their perpetual hymn of praise.

Girolamo Benivieni, poet and Florentine gentleman, gazes forth from the picture-frame of the Torrigiani Gallery, musing on the theme of his own canticles and lauds. The Christ Child stands above the altar of the chapel in the Church of San Lorenzo, where the memory of the Medici may linger in pomp of funeral rite, but whose dust "nevermore may clog the feet of men."

The works of the painters are unchanged, — the head of Savonarola in the corridor beyond the cloister garden of his monastery, Saint Augustine on the wall of the Church of Ognissanti, the Nativity in the Academy of the Fine Arts. Cronaca pervades his native city in a swift, intangible fashion. Saint John the Evangelist, in heavy bronze draperies of Baccio da Montelupo, guards the sanctuary of Or San Michele, in company with the other saints in their niches.

The bronze Boar spouts a jet of fresh water from his dripping jaws for the thirsty children, beside the arches of the Mercato Nuovo.

Justice on her column poises her scales, judging the town. We might search in vain for the *loggia* beside the Church of Santa Maria Sopramano, where Tadda and his son worked for eleven years, patiently hewing the porphyry in the five or six separate pieces, to form the statue which was destined to commemorate Duke Cosimo's victories over his enemies, called "the monument of the two injustices."

The season is the Feast of the Watermelon. The ruddy-hearted fruit is piled up on the steps of the obelisk, and vended on street corners on little stands and carts. Now is the moment when the worldly-wise, if selfish, precept of the proverb is inculcated in every urchin: "In the time of melons lend not the knife."

The bells of the church towers hold full sway over the town, marking the passing hours. The gray tower of Galileo rises above the olives on one side of the river; and Fiesole, the Ancient Mother, watches on her opposite crag.

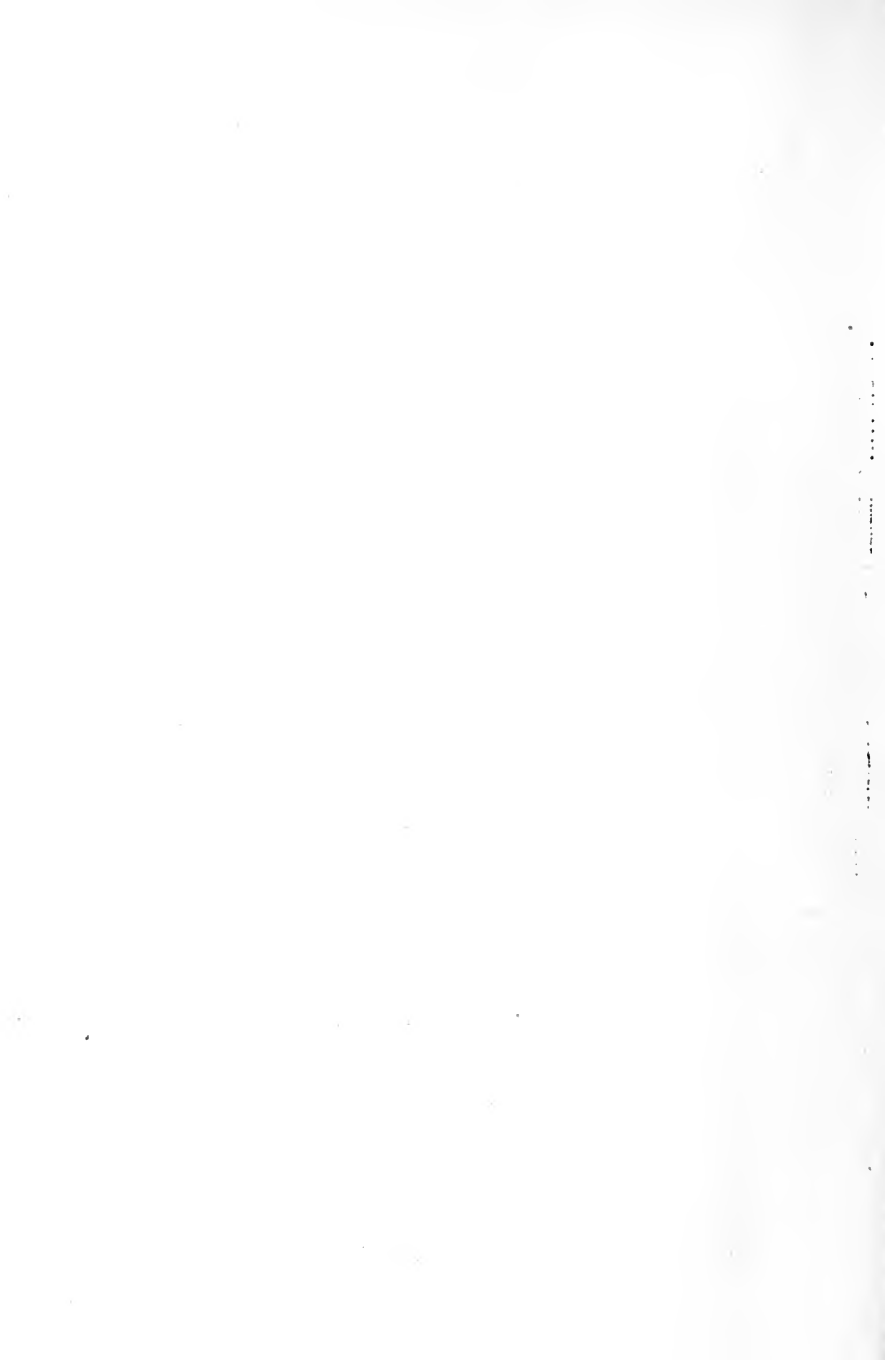
Twilight falls on the Flower City, and the lamps of the street shrine begin to tremble in the darkness, protected by the projecting arch. The mosaic Madonna of Andrea Tafi has once more hidden her face within the curtains of her window-sash. A gust of wind might readily extinguish the Five Lamps, yet the vital spark of flame burns on, ever recalling the reformer and his followers.

Even now, in the full tide of the nineteenth century, the wayfarer may pause in the obscurity of the street and question his own soul:—

Watchman, what of the night?

And the Florence Window? What is the casement other than the mind open to receive the light of a circumscribed limit of locality, and closed, save memory?

I N D E X.



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